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ABSTRACT

This study investigated autonomous local home schooling parent support groups in Kansas. The home schooling movement in Kansas is an alternative educational entity whose membership has recently been increasing. Accompanying support groups have also increased in number. The purpose of this study was to conduct a naturalistic inquiry into the concerns and functions of these groups as perceived by their leaders. Characteristics shared by the groups were analyzed. The population used for the study was drawn from 26 local autonomous home schooling parent support groups in Kansas. Triangulation of information was provided through unstructured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Five major concerns, and the accompanying functions which affect the home schooling parent support group movement, were identified. Functions related to: (1) legal concerns; (2) support concerns; (3) group activities; (4) teacher training, curriculum, testing, and resources; and (5) new home schooling families. The document includes a literature review covering the history of home schooling from the 1600s to the present. Also discussed are characteristics of home schooling families, reasons parents give for home schooling, cognitive and affective outcomes of home schooling, and the relationship between home schooling and public schools. Additional concerns are discussed. Related materials and a bibliography of 143 references are appended. (GLR)

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HOME SCHOOLING PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS IN KANSAS: A NATURALISTIC INQUIRY INTO THEIR CONCERNS AND FUNCTIONS

by

Celia Bishop

B.M., Kansas University, 1960
B.F.A., Kansas University, 1960
M.S., Kansas State University, 1987

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College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Home schooling parent support groups have emerged in the American academic sector as a "grass roots" movement with specific beliefs in their constitutional prerogative to educate their children in the home.

In A Nation At Risk, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) determined that the public school system was in a state of crisis. The resurgence of home education appears to be the response to this crisis by concerned parents motivated by a desire to instill educational excellence, provide physical safety, transmit traditional moral verities, and inculcate strong family unity (Rose, 1985; Gustavsen, 1980).

There is a rapidly accumulating body of professional literature in education defining the demographics of the population engaged in home schooling, and documenting the learning outcomes of such individualized, tutorial instruction. However, the existing literature is notably silent concerning home schooling parent support groups.

Home schooling leaders maintain the importance of home schooling parent support groups. The effectiveness of the support groups as a strengthening and unifying factor in legal, social, and relational identity is attested to in books, newsletters, and magazines published within the home schooling movement.

Mark and Helen Hegner, editors of the Home Education Magazine, write, "The real strength of the home schooling movement is still to be found in the individual families and in the local support groups" (Hegner, 1989).

An innovator in the home schooling movement, Dr. Raymond Moore, declared in a letter to state leaders and home school researchers, "Our pillars are our state leaders and support groups" (Letter, May, 1990).

The home schooling movement has become a consequential and actualizing trend in American education. Parent support groups at the local, state, and national levels have formed intersecting channels of communication, established to provide an on-going dissemination of pertinent information. Each year, these support groups increase in number and organizational strength as they are afforded public recognition.

Naisbitt (1982) predicted the development of educating at home as part of America's move toward "self-help" and decentralization. "In its most radical form, the new educational self-help movement has produced a steady stream of new alternative schools and attempts to move the education process from the schools into the homes, either as a supplement to the regular school curriculum or as an outright threat to the compulsory education laws.....In the 1960's and 1970's the self-help approach to education took the form of creating alternative schools; in the 1980's it will be home education" (pg. 143, 144).

Michael Farris, a lawyer with the nationwide Home School Legal Defense Association, monitors legislation concerning home schooling throughout the United States. He writes, "Currently thirty-two states have laws which specifically authorize and regulate home schooling. Thirty of these laws have been passed since 1982. Thus, it is apparent that enactment of new legislation specifically for home schooling is a strong trend" (The Teaching Home, April\May 1991).

Fugate (1990) emphasizes the importance of the home schooling parent support groups when he writes, "I firmly believe that local, organized groups, whether

based around a church, a Christian school, or a well-run community group, are essential to the on-going strength of the home school movement" (pg. 31).

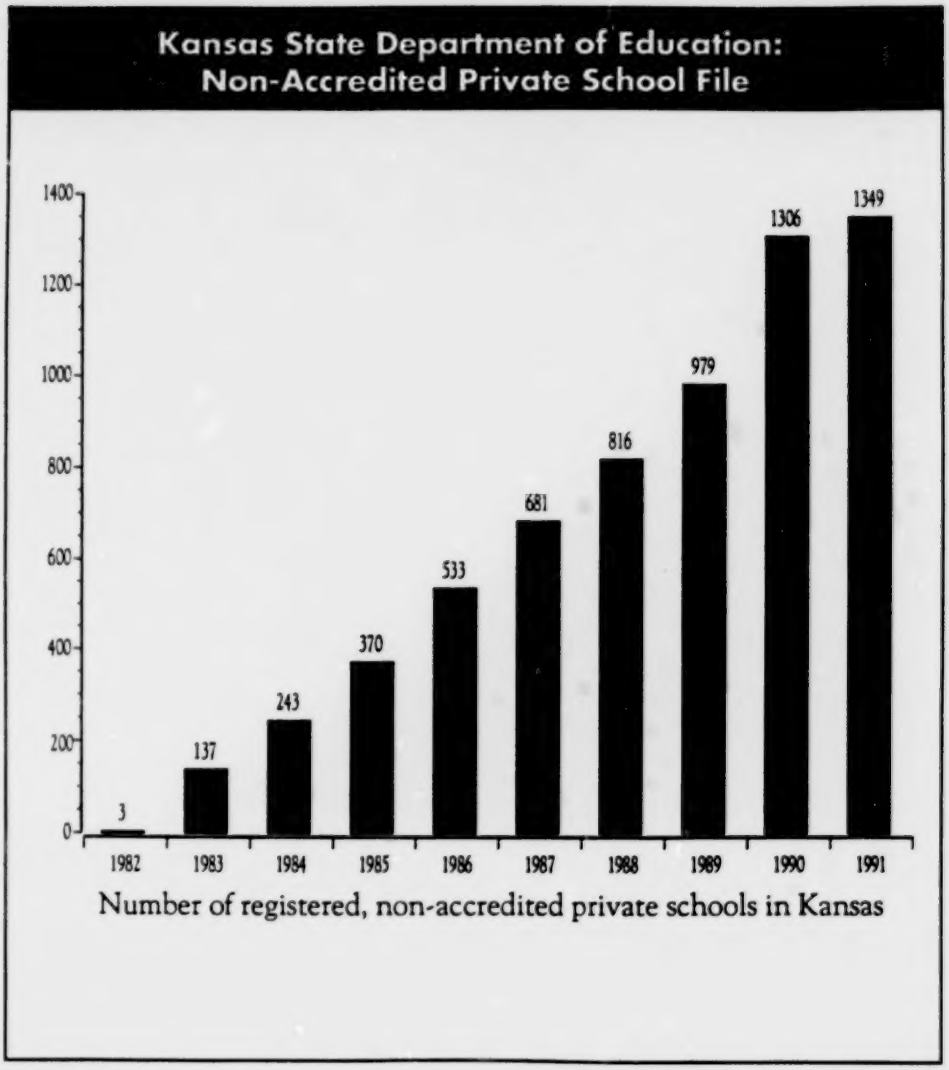
Ballman (1987) issues a caveat to the educational establishment when he writes, "Home schooling is destined to become one of the most exciting and explosive movements of the eighties and nineties. Already it is the signpost of a profound social and educational shift at the grass-roots level" (pg. 13).

NEED FOR THE STUDY

An increasing number of Kansas children of legal school age are being educated exclusively in the home. In order to comply with the provisions of K.S.A. 72-53, 100 through 72-53, 102, home schooling families, in 1982, were required to register with the Kansas State Department of Education as non-accredited private schools. Schools found to be in non-compliance were under threat of closure.

That first year, three non-accredited private schools registered with the state. In the nine years to follow, the home schooling movement experienced a

phenomenal expansion in Kansas. In 1991, one thousand, three hundred forty-nine non-accredited private schools were registered.



The origin of the term "home schooling parent support groups" is not known.

In 1980, there were no officially recognized home schooling parent support groups in Kansas. Due to the ambiguity of the law, parents who chose to educate their own children at home had no criteria or guidelines for determining how to achieve compliance with the existing legislation. The safest recourse available for continuing the home education of their children lay in anonymity.

By 1984, a group of parents in Wichita who were committed to home schooling invited Dr. Raymond Moore, a recognized authority and spokesperson for home schooling, to conduct a two-day seminar in Olathe, Kansas. A short time later, two more home schooling parent support groups were organized.

"The inspiration from others who are involved in home school operations" was listed by Gustavsen (1980) as one of five factors essential for success in establishing a school in the home (pg. 145).

By 1990, eighteen local home schooling parent support groups were reported in the Kansans for Alternative Education Newsletter (Oct. 1990). Eight more home schooling parent support groups were listed

with the Teaching Parents Association.

These twenty-six local home schooling parent support groups are autonomous in character. They form a network of communication and support across the physiographic provinces of Kansas. Home schooling parent support groups are founded in most areas where there are home schooling families. This consortium of families educates thousands of children of school age in Kansas.

Because of the compelling interest of the state for an educated citizenry, concerned inquiry has been directed to the home schooling educational programs. The focus of this inquiry is aimed toward acquiring a more dimensional understanding of the mutual objective to reach excellence in education by both the public education authorities and the home schooling parents.

There is a paucity of literature on home schooling parent support groups; little is known about their concerns and functions. The findings in this study will aid in eliminating this void.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

References to home schooling parent support groups in professional literature and doctoral dissertations are scarce and findings are dissimilar. There is insufficient information relating to their concerns, their functions, and their impact within the home schooling movement.

Home schooling parent support groups may exist without volunteering knowledge of their existence to those not within the home schooling movement.

Rose (1985) states that during his investigation of home schooling families in South Carolina, he became aware of groups of home schooling families where no membership list of names or addresses existed. He writes that home schooling families were "usually grouped in geographical areas and often met together to encourage social interaction, exchange ideas, and generally encourage each other" (pg. 110).

Van Galen (1986), in a paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Studies Association, describes the role played by Christian home schooling support groups in helping Christian home schooling parents become apprised of the norms, values,

and practices associated with the Christian home schooling movement.

Linden (1983) writes that some families who home school were affected by their affiliation with home schooling parent organizations, while the results from a questionnaire in Gladin's work (1987) suggested home schooling families were not influenced by home schooling parent organizations.

In a study of home school characteristics and the families who operate them, Gustavsen (1980) reports that 55.2 percent of parents who home school did not belong to any home schooling parent organization. "Reasons for this isolation may be that the parents do not know that organized home school associations exist, or perhaps they are suspicious of these organizations. Other parents may just be operating under the threat of government intervention and penalty; thus they prefer going at it on their own" (pg. 125). The remaining 44.8 percent of parents were members of an organized, overt parent support group.

The issue of the home schooling movement as an alternative method of education is a growing consideration for superintendents, teachers, principals, school boards, legislators, and other officials in the

educational establishment.

Home schooling groups are exhibiting rapid generativity, bearing psychosocial implications for the future of American education. Practical and relevant research providing descriptive analysis of the conceptual basis of home schooling parent support groups is needed. This research will afford rationales for creating integrated guidelines in communication and professional interaction.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Recognizing the importance of the home schooling movement to the education of an increasing number of students in Kansas, and realizing the scarcity of information in professional literature about the home schooling parent support groups, this study has investigated the autonomous local home schooling parent support groups in Kansas.

The study is a naturalistic inquiry into the concerns and functions of home schooling parent support groups in Kansas as articulated by home schooling parent support group leaders. It describes the working of home

schooling parent support groups by an analysis of characteristics found in common among the various autonomous groups.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms to be used in this investigation will be defined as follows:

1. Non-accredited private elementary or secondary school means an organization which regularly offers education at the elementary or secondary level and attendance at which satisfies the compulsory school attendance laws of the state of Kansas, but which is not accredited by the state board of education (from Kansas Statute 72-53, 100).
2. Home school means a non-accredited private elementary or secondary school conducted by parents at home according to some established criteria.
3. Home schooling parent support group means local or statewide groups of home schooling parents who convene on a regular basis.

4. Home schooling means the activity of parents instructing their children in their homes in a manner that precludes attendance in public or traditional private school.

5. Parent means father, mother, foster parent, or guardian.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will provide information to school board members, social workers, professional educators, home schooling parents, and others concerned with children about the home schooling movement in Kansas. The focus will be affixed on local home schooling parent support groups. This information will enable school board members, social workers, professional educators, home schooling parents, and others to make informed decisions in the best interest of the child.

Although it is not mandatory under Kansas law for parents who are educating their children at home to maintain communication with local school authorities, such authorities become involved through reports of

truancy. This study will be of value to public educators at the local level when determining which children are truant and which children are attending school in the home.

This study will promulgate a mutual understanding and cooperation between the public education sector and parents who have chosen to educate their children at home.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON HOME SCHOOLING

The purpose of this review of the literature concerning home schooling is to provide an understanding of the current significant issues related to this alternative method of education. The focus of this review encompasses those educational issues related to home schooling. The structure of this review is developed through two pertinent segments which are individual in their own right, while collectively they summarize the body of work. These segments are:

1.) a historical and philosophical overview of the background of home schooling in the United States, beginning with the colonial era, to the advent of frontier schooling after the Civil War, through the resurgence of home schooling in the latter part of the twentieth century.

2.) a general summary of the social, familial, and academic effects and influences of home schooling methodology upon students who are schooled at home.

HISTORY OF HOME SCHOOLING

1600:

When English colonists emigrated to America, they transmitted the wealth of English culture. A significant part of this culture was the Christian ethic and the British Common Law that had developed and prevailed in England over the centuries. Kester (1984) writes, "The Common Law pervaded all states, except those influenced by the Civil Law" (pg. 3).

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1969) defines the Common Law as, "The system of laws originated and developed in England, based on court decisions, on the doctrines implicit in those decisions, and on customs and usages, rather than on codified written laws."

William Blackstone wrote extensive commentaries on the Common Law. Blackstone's Commentaries (1809) stated that parents owed children three duties: maintenance, protection, and education. It was deemed the duty of parents to provide their children "an education suitable to their station in life" (pg. 450). Blackstone felt strongly that when the education of the child was neglected, both the individual and society experienced a

debilitation in its growth.

Before the creation and adoption of the American Constitution, the education of children was the responsibility of their parents under the aegises of England's Common Law. Hamilton (1984) writes, "For early European settlers in colonial America, the family assumed the responsibility for transferring the culture, socializing the young, and providing vocational training. Each settlement, intent on ensuring the continuation of its heritage, supported the family as the major agent for transmitting the culture across the generations. The family was responsible for training the children in learning, particularly in the areas of reading and understanding the principles of religion and the laws of the country" (pg. 1).

To broaden the academic spectrum and pragmatize its content in the teaching of colonial children, two primary methods of tutorial education came into existence. These were the "dame school" and "apprenticeships."

"Dame schools" were arrangements between parents and a "woman" of the community who used her home for instructing several children in the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The "apprenticeship" system involved a contractual arrangement between the parents and a vocational teacher who would bring the children into his home while training them in his trade. In exchange for this training, the child was indentured to the teacher for a stipulated amount of time (Cubberley, 1962).

The New England Colonies were the vanguard in establishing legislation to govern the education of children. The first general education law in New England was passed in Massachusetts Colony in 1642. Lape (1987) writes, "While the School Law of 1642 made education compulsory, no provisions were made for schools or teachers. The teachers were often parents or tutors, and education was regarded as part of the household work....This law did not provide free education (the apprentice paid with his labor), nor was it public (only young men, not women, were accepted), but it was the beginning of a trend toward education for the average worker which continued from that time forward" (pg. 21).

Five years later, in 1647, Massachusetts Colony passed a law requiring each town populated by at least fifty families to provide an elementary school teacher for the education of their children. Towns with a

population of one hundred families or more were required to provide a Latin grammar school. This early education legislation was developed to ensure that parental responsibility was upheld in the education of children. The mandates of the state functioned as overseers for assuring that parents were carrying out the task of educating their children (Knight, 1951).

The Middle Colonies were disinclined to adopt legislation requiring unified education. In the rural areas of the Middle Colonies there were fewer schools than there were in the market towns and more industrialized communities of the New England colonies. Because of the vast cultural differences of the families in the Middle Colonies, the educational system required great diversity. The religious groups in the farming communities were prone to provide non-secular education by establishing parochial schools. The government remained indifferent to participating in the development of legislation to achieve a unified, stabilizing approach to education such as existed in the more urban New England Colonies (Cubberley, 1922).

In the Southern Colonies, a three-level class system evolved: the plantation dynasties of the aristocracy, the middle class comprised of merchants and land owning

farmers with moderate acreage, and an all inclusive category of the common laborer and servant. The type and quality of education was determined by the social class of the family in which the child was educated. The aristocratic class engaged tutors to educate their children at home. The middle class strata of farmers and merchants used a familial structure for the education of their children. The quality of education imparted to the progeny was determined solely by the academic background and expertise of the parents.

"Although colonial legislation for education existed in the seventeenth century, most legislation was for the benefit of the servant and laboring classes, or for orphaned or illegitimate children" (Lape, 1987, pg. 7). Schools for indigent children were regarded as charity institutions (Hamilton, 1984).

In none of the colonies was school attendance mandatory (Hamilton, 1984).

Lape (1987) summarizes colonial education by writing, "Home schooling existed in all of the original colonies. It existed for different reasons, and in different quantities, yet it was recognized as an integral aspect of the colonial educational experience. Colonial families could not always rely on other

institutions to help with the educational process. The family had to transmit orally the knowledge, skills, and values of living in the colonies" (pg. 29).

1700:

In the chaotic years during which the Revolutionary War was being fought, the issue of education was obscured by more consequential priorities. When the Constitution of the United States was framed, no provision was established for the education of American children. The parental prerogative to determine the type of education for their children dates from the finalizing of the Constitution of the United States, which protects the citizen's freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to privacy (Fugate, 1990).

The United States Constitution offers the option to the individual states to establish schools for the education of its children. The Tenth Amendment reads, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people."

This opportunity was not addressed in the Constitutions of the newly formed states. Although there continued to be no system of compulsory schools,

historical evidence suggests that colonial America was a literate society (Whitehead, 1984).

John Adams, in 1765, observed that, "A native of America, especially of New England, who cannot read and write is as rare a phenomenon as a comet" (Texas Home School Coalition, 1986).

In the late 1700's, "Education remained ambiguous. The family's situation and priorities determined when, how, and if a child were to receive the opportunity, and there were people who believed that education by the state was an invasion of the parental and family function. Education was received through dame schools, private tutors, private schools, or through any other available resource. The home was still the principal unit of primary education in all sections and among all classes" (Lape, 1987, pg. 46).

1800:

During the decades of the nineteenth century, societal changes impeded the progress of education in America. With the exploration and settling of the American frontier, and the burgeoning problems accompanying population increase and unregulated immigration toward the close of the century, the

significance of education and literacy was diminished.

Lape (1987) writes, "The energies of the people were still directed toward recovery from the Revolutionary War because the nation had become impoverished and burdened with debt; not all believed independence was wise. Difficult living conditions of pioneer and frontier life lowered educational standards, and there was little interest in education among the people. Since the need for education was not widely felt, illiteracy was not considered a problem" (pg. 48).

While education was not a meaningful priority in the socio-economic and cultural demand of a post-Revolutionary War society, evidence found in primary documents indicates an educational imperative on the part of some isolated families.

Primary documents and personal writings inscribed during the 1800's include evidence indicating that there were efforts made to provide children with a foundation of literacy.

The journal of Tommie Clack tells of her education in Lytle Creek, Texas, in the 1870's. Her mother was her teacher. "She loved the outdoors and would tell us about trees, the flowers, the rocks, the birds and the animals that lived up and down the creek.....At night

she would take her astronomy book out into the moonlight and teach us to recognize Ursa Minor and Ursa Major, and how to locate the North Star" (Clack, 1870).

In their book, Women of the West, Luchetti and Olwell write of one West Texas mother who would "gather her children around an old plank on which she had painted a keyboard. As each child hit a painted key, Mollie would sing out the corresponding note. They practiced daily until Mollie was able to buy an organ, and then it was her heart's delight to have her children sit down to a real instrument and play" (pg. 31).

The rapid spread of industrialization and the concentration of sophisticated mercantile communities developing in the East drew citizens from rural areas to seek employment in these urbanized sectors. This migration focused attention on the illiteracy prevalent at the time. Philanthropic organizations, directed for assisting the poor and uneducated, determined that illiteracy was a problem to be alleviated. Among these target groups were included "free negros, children of certain religious groups, and children of poverty" (Knight, 1951).

The titles of these philanthropic groups described their aims: The Philadelphia Society for the Free

Instruction of Indigent Boys, the Benevolent Society of the City of Baltimore for the Education of the Female Poor, the Sunday school movement, and the Free School Society of New York (Knight 1951).

In 1806, Joseph Lancaster, a philanthropist noted for his innovations in education, designed a system of instruction which allowed one teacher to organize and monitor the education of several hundred children. Using the Lancasterian method of education, one teacher was responsible for teaching information to ten children. When this information was successfully memorized, those ten children then became transmitters of the same facts to another group of children, until compounded numbers of students in the Lancasterian school had memorized the work.

This inverted pyramid system of instruction was influential in changing the direction of education. Lancaster provided an educational procedure which could teach numerous children at minimal expense compared to the cost of the tutorial method (Good, 1962).

Rose (1985) proffers the insight that the trade unions, in an effort to curtail the economic exploitation of the untutored work force, became instrumental in perpetrating a recognition of the need

for tax supported public schools.

He writes, "In 1833 tradesmen began to organize locally. A few craft unions became national in scope and attempts were made to organize a national trades union....The upper classes had long had a substantial monopoly on education and had used it to protect their favored position. The spokesmen of labor now undertook, through political action, to break down this monopoly and to establish systems of tax-supported, non-sectarian schools" (pg. 17).

The years between 1830 and 1865 have come to be known as the "Age of the Common School."

According to contemporary educational historians, two primary societal developments were the redounding forces behind the forming of state supported common schools. The first major causative factor for the outgrowth of the common school was the Industrial Revolution which instigated a vast shifting of rural populations to the urban areas making mass education feasible.

The second development was the aggregate immigration of Europeans settling in America after the Civil War. Education provided by public monies was seen as the most effective method of socialization for this

disparate population (Beshoner, 1980).

Lape (1987) writes concerning the latter half of the nineteenth century, "The nineteenth-century schools attempted to provide opportunities for students and to overcome or compensate for indulgent or neglectful families. More students were attending schools although the problems of working children and immigrants still existed. It was not until the twentieth century that formalized schooling for the majority of children became a reality. Throughout these years, the informal education received at home provided some or all of the education received. Home schools existed not as an alternative form of education, but to fulfill basic needs" (pg. 73).

By the closing of the nineteenth century, most states had already established compulsory school attendance laws. As state sponsored, tax supported, public schools became the prevailing mode of education for children, the role of home schooling rapidly declined. This compulsory requirement of school attendance caused a plenary shift of responsibility for the education of children from parental accountability to a charge of the state. Hamilton (1984) writes, "States began enacting compulsory school attendance

statutes around the time of the Civil War. In 1852, Massachusetts enacted the first compulsory school attendance law in the United States. The District of Columbia enacted its first compulsory school attendance law in 1864, followed by Vermont in 1867. In the 1870's and 1880's, twenty-four states enacted compulsory attendance laws, and by 1918, every state in the union had enacted a compulsory attendance law" (pg. 1).

1900:

Although the state assumed a greater role in educating children, this transition from home to schoolroom created no notable conflict with the moral and social standards taught in the home. An apparent synthesis of goals for education evolved between public schools and the expectations of the parents.

Gustavsen (1980) asserts that during the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, "The nature even of state-supported education showed the attachment of community schools to the roots of home-school-oriented education. This especially applied to the frontier territories even when they began to develop into states. This link between homes and public schools was mirrored in the "boarding around" custom. The

teacher would board at the homes of the parents during the school term. This saved a basic amount of money needed in teacher pay. But it accomplished one other thing, often overlooked. This practice placed the teacher in intimate contact with the home setting and the goals of the parents. It was bound to produce a degree of continuity between the home and the classroom" (pg. 25).

Educational principles and components which had been instituted in the last decades of the nineteenth century contributed to the rapid growth of the public educational school system in the twentieth century. Acceptance of taxation of citizens for compulsory education became a standard economic reality. Federal involvement in public schools allowed for greater expenditures for educational programs. Single classroom instruction with a conglomerate of ages and intellectual capabilities gave way to the increase of a graded structure in the state school system. To meet the demands caused by the rise of literacy, state high schools and state universities were founded. These universities became the training ground for a contemporary generation of skilled public school teachers (Drake, 1961).

The growth of public education is described by Gustavsen (1980). "Gradually, education in America became the responsibility of government. As this system grew into a sizeable institution, assuming greater and greater responsibilities for the education and development of children and youth, the expenses reached staggering proportions that had to be met through taxation. Consequently, an elaborate and comprehensive educational system has resulted" (pg. 3).

American commitment to education became a high priority throughout the nation. It had become a national educational principle that every American child, regardless of economic status, religious persuasion, or ethnic background should be entitled to an academic foundation through the public school system. The reality of this expectation led to the decline of home schooling as a significant factor in education. Because of the proliferation of public schools throughout the nation and the high rise of literacy during the first half of the twentieth century, the family home schooling practice became almost extinct.

In the 1960's and 1970's noted educators brought forth analysis of learning patterns and behaviorisms in children. They determined that, for a segment of

students, the public school system was failing to produce academic success.

John Holt (1964) was a leading spokesperson for alternative education. His assessment of the learning process precluded large numbers of children in a structured classroom environment. "It is not subject matter that makes some learning more valuable than others, but the spirit in which the work is done. If a child is doing the kind of learning that most children do in school, when they learn at all--swallowing words, to spit back at the teacher on demand--he is wasting his time, or rather, we are wasting it for him. This learning will not be permanent, or relevant, or useful. But a child who is learning naturally, following his curiosity where it leads him, adding to his mental model of reality whatever he needs and can find a place for and rejecting without fear or guilt what he does not need, is growing--in knowledge, in the love of learning, and in the ability to learn" (pg. 220).

The social disorder in the 1970's and 1980's, the increase of drug abuse, the breakdown of the nuclear family, and the proliferation of crime was reflected in the disruptions in the public school system. Violence in the classrooms and school yards increased. Truancy

was on the rise. Academic decline was noted through an analysis of the nationally standardized test scores. Inclusion of non-academic content such as values clarification, explicit sex education, death education, and situation ethics which was incompatible with long standing family traditions and values caused a schism between the family and the public school system (Ballman, 1987).

Gabler (1985) catalogues modifications in the educational climate when he compares the offenses perpetrated in public schools in 1940 to the major offenses in public schools in the 1980's.

Major offenses in public schools in 1940:

1.) Talking
2.) Chewing gum
3.) Running in the halls
4.) Wearing improper clothes
5.) Making noise
6.) Not putting paper in wastebaskets
7.) Getting out of turn in line

Major offenses in public schools in the 1980's:

1.) Rape	11.) Absenteeism
2.) Robbery	12.) Vandalism
3.) Assault	13.) Murder
4.) Personal theft	14.) Extortion
5.) Burglary	15.) Gang warfare
6.) Drug abuse	16.) Pregnancies
7.) Arson	17.) Abortions
8.) Bombings	18.) Suicide
9.) Alcoholic abuse	19.) General disease
10.) Carrying of weapons	20.) Lying and cheating

(pg. 21, 22)

In the 22nd Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, taken in September of 1990, residents of Princeton, New Jersey, were queried about what they believed the top-priority of educational goals ought to be for the year 2000. Fifty-five percent of the respondents indicated that their top-priority goal was to have drug-free and violence-free schools.

The 1983 National Commission on Excellence in Education reported grave problems existent in the academic achievement of the public school students. In its report to Congress, it noted, "The College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) demonstrate a virtually unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980. Average verbal scores fell over fifty points and average mathematics scores dropped nearly forty points." The same report determined that there was a distressing decline in literacy, especially among minority youths. "About 13 percent of all seventeen-year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent. Some twenty-three million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension" (National

Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Although public schools remained the basic environment for educating children through the 1980's, parents experienced a growing disenchantment toward the outcomes of a public school education. Many forms of alternative education have arisen to answer the demand for an educated citizenry. During this period of educational unrest, attitudes toward home schooling have resurfaced.

A resurgence in home schooling has been found among a small coalition of families throughout America who are desirous of having their children instructed in pragmatic as well as theoretic knowledge. Raymond Moore (1982) describes the attitude found among many proponents of home schooling. "In one sense you are teaching all your waking moments--as models to your offspring. Yet while some parents are more diligent than others, none need to formally teach a full school day. Seldom are more than two or three hours of formal academic instruction a day appropriate. Many mothers and fathers limit their formal teaching to little more than an hour. Some form family corporations and make, sell, and earn. Much more important is your working with your children in physical work, helping them learn

practical skills and the nobility of work--building character qualities of initiative, industry, neatness, order, responsibility, and dependability, that are hard to find in even one in ten children or young adults today" (pg. 12, 13).

Moore (1982) reminds us that the large classroom settings of our public schools have never been proved to be the instructional mode with the highest potential for fostering learning. Moore believes that the tutorial method found in the home school setting has never been excelled by institutional settings when it comes to basic learning outcomes.

As more families became involved in the home schooling movement, parents, in their search for certainties and specific direction, formed group meetings for the purpose of sharing experiences and gaining insights for the effective education of their children. An outreach by local home schooling parent support groups created networks of communication extending to other home schooling families throughout the state. State leaders, writers, and spokespersons for the movement developed newsletters with nationwide mailing lists. A list published in the Teaching Home Magazine indicates statewide support groups and contact

persons in all fifty states.

Preiss (1989) reports that as parents confront the tangle of regulations fashioned by individual states through a conglomeration of guidelines, statutes, and laws, they are prompted to seek collaboration and mutual support. A core approach to parental assistance, according to Preiss, is available within support group membership. These home schooling parent support groups may become repositories and dispensers of home schooling information.

Preiss (1989) writes, "As parents cope with the responsibility of providing most of their children's education, they find the need for support, and support is available. It is available in many forms, and one key form is support groups. Geographically, support groups may be divided into three realms: national-international operations, state-wide associations, and regional and local groups" (pg. 12).

Gustavsen (1980) recommends, "All parents involved in home schools should seek more effective methods of unified action, both in sharing knowledge, experience and resources, and in group action coordinated to bring maximum class action power and yet ensure the unique independence of the home school units" (pg. 151).

This concludes the historical and philosophical overview of the background of home schooling in the United States, beginning with the colonial era, to the advent of frontier schooling after the Civil War, through the resurgence of home schooling in the latter part of the twentieth century.

The next section of this review will be a general summary of the social, familial, and academic effects and influences of home schooling methodology upon students who are schooled at home.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES WHO HOME SCHOOL

Ray (1986) summarizes, "It is apparent that a wide variety of individuals are involved in home schooling, just as the U.S. is comprised of a pluralistic group. Home school involves: agnostics, Christians, Mormons, five and seventeen-year-olds, low-and high-income families, Blacks, Orientals, and Caucasians, parents with Ph.D.s and parents with G.E.D.s, and one-child and ten-children families" (pg. 41).

Ray (1986) characterizes the average home school as being conducted by parents who are college graduates with a combined household income of from $20,000 to $30,000. Over sixty percent regularly attend the services of their religious persuasion. The typical home schooling family is comprised of three children. "One trait that is usually implied, and occasionally explicit, in the literature is that the parents who home school their children are extremely interested in and concerned about the total education of their children" (pg. 42).

Schmidt (1989) finds that families who home school have more children, are a degree more affluent, are more academically oriented, and are more consistent church

participants than the general population.

Mayberry (1989) determines that parents in the typical American home schooling family have experienced higher education and live in small towns or rural areas. They support their families with earnings from professional or skilled occupations.

Gladin (1987) surveyed a random sample of home schooling families cited in the Bob Jones University Press home school mailing list. From an analysis of the questionnaire response, the average home schooling parents were young adult professionals with college educations who resided in a suburban environment. They had three children. Their income was above average.

Williams (1990) reports that the home schooling parents in Ohio, when brought into a comparison with the general population of Ohio, are more likely to be married, be better educated, and earn more money. They appear to be employed in professional, technical, managerial, or administrative occupations.

Buhr (1988) obtained a demographic profile of home schooling parents in Arizona which indicated the aforesaid parents tended to achieve a higher level of education, greater earned income, and a greater number of children in their family.

Maness (1988) surveyed home schooling parents in Oklahoma and South Dakota and found the home schooling parents to be politically conservative.

Knopf (1988) ascertained that the majority of parents in Sacramento County, California, who decided to home school their children were high school graduates with two years of college and were without a teaching credential. The religious affiliations of the home schooling families were widely varied. The greater percentage of families reported their incomes to be less than $40,000 a year.

REASONS PARENTS GIVE FOR HOME SCHOOLING

Wartes (1986) summarizes his study for the Home School Researcher, 3(1). "While reasons relating to religion or philosophy were the dominant choice for why people home school, they were barely so. Following closely were, in order, the avoidance of peer pressure, greater parent-child contact, and the enabling of better self-concept. Additional reasons near the top of the list included avoidance of competition, a more personalized learning experience, and to accomplish more

academically. It is interesting to note that five of the above seven reasons deal more with the social/ emotional/ relational domain than with religious or academic criteria" (pg. 2).

Bliss (1989) writes, "Reasons common to most home educating families include: 1.) academic excellence, 2.) teaching character and morals, 3.) strengthening the family unit, 4.) acting on religious convictions, 5.) integrating education with life" (pg. 56).

Mayberry (1989) writes, "While families have complex motives for home schooling, a common factor is parents' desire to maintain or further develop family unity and to resist the effects of urbanization and modernization on the family." Additional findings revealed that parents are motivated by religion, caliber of socialization, quality of education, or an alternative life-style.

Ray (1989) finds a basic motivation for home schooling parents to be their desire to impart Christian values to their children.

Van Galen (1988) interviewed twenty-three parents from sixteen families to determine explanations for deciding to school their children at home. The results of this study indicated that these parents believed home

schooling would strengthen the unity in their families, that public schools promote values and tenets that are in direct opposition to their familial traditions, and that home schooling parents can understand the specific educational needs of their children.

Gladin (1989) finds the home schooling families who responded to a questionnaire were motivated to start their home school predicated on religious convictions. Included were their concerns about the negative effects of peer pressure on their children.

Karen Williams (1990) indicated that religious factors were highly significant to Ohio parents when deciding to educate their children at home. The survey respondents stated their concern about the pressures imposed on children in the public school sector, the quality of education, and the intrusion of secular humanism into the public school's curriculum. Home schooling parents in Ohio believed that their home schooling education offered the child more individual attention in a family-centered learning environment, tutorial instruction, and a God-centered curriculum that emphasizes the beliefs, values, and morals of the parent.

The results of an investigation of thirteen home

schooling families in Michigan surmise that reasons for home schooling children include the negative influences in our society which are mirrored in our public school environment, lack of confidence in our public school system, and for religious commitment (Hansen, 1988).

Maness (1988) assessed results from a questionnaire proffered to home schooling parents in South Dakota and Oklahoma. It was concluded that parents home schooled their children for religious principles and ethical philosophy. Other reasons were negative peer pressure, and rivalry and competition among the students in the public schools. Families agreed that the public schools had too much violence and did not protect the moral values of the parents.

Knopf's (1988) survey of home schooling families in Sacramento County, California, indicated that the most frequently given reasons for opting to home school their children were to provide greater opportunity for moral instruction, to increase familial involvement in the child's education, and to assure a higher quality in academic achievement.

Gustavsen (1980) surveyed two hundred and twenty-one home schooling families to determine why they had decided to home school. The major reason was that the

parents were concerned about the development of their children's character and moral well-being. Rivalry and ridicule in the public school, violence, and the poor quality of public education were other causes that were offered.

Schmidt (1989) writes, "From analyzing parents' reasons for home schooling, it appears these parents care deeply about their children, wanting the best possible education for them at the cost of deep personal sacrifice. Also, a parent's decision to home school involves strong conviction regarding their children's moral and educational well-being and a rejection of institutionalized schooling as the place where this well-being can best be fostered" (pg. 39).

Preiss (1989) writes, "There exists within the home schooling community a sense of unity which transcends ideological, political, and religious concerns. That unity lies in the parents' commitment to the education of their children" (pg. 6).

COGNITIVE OUTCOMES OF HOME SCHOOLING

A review of the literature pertaining to research into the cognitive outcomes of the home schooling movement in America points to the presence of effectual benefits from this home education. The test scores of the home schooled students have equaled or surpassed the scores of their public school peers on standardized measures of academic achievement (Delahooke, 1986; Falle, 1986; Frost, 1988; Linden, 1983; Lines, 1985; Rakestraw, 1988; Ray, 1988, 1990; Rose, 1985; Van Galen, 1988; Wartes, 1988, 1989, 1990; The Tennessee Department of Education, 1988; The Oregon Department of Education, 1990). Home schoolers from North Carolina, Washington, Alabama, Alaska, California, Tennessee, Oregon, Arkansas, and Texas were represented in the studies.

Ray (1990) conducted a study focused on the academic results for home schooled children across the nation. The study included 4600 children from 1516 families who were home schooling. For this study, a random sample was selected from among the 15,000 member families of the Home School Legal Defense Association. Test scores from this group averaged:

Reading:.....84th percentile

Listening:..... 85th percentile
Language:..... 80th percentile
Mathematics:... 81st percentile
Science:..... 84th percentile
Social Studies:.83rd percentile

Linden (1983) writes, "Test scores would suggest that they progressed at an academic rate equal to that of students in public schools. In some instances, training in the fine arts was a commodity which most public schools could not match" (pg. 59).

Moore (1988) wrote, "We did a study of 31 families taken to court across the nation, and found that the average child scored 81.1 percentile on standardized tests. And among the Hewitt-Moore Child Development Center's 5000 or more students, the current average is well above 80 percentile, including students transferring from public schools" (pg. 28).

Particularly significant to this review were the results of the Alaska assessment tests. The same curriculum was used for both the home schooled students and the conventionally schooled students. "Alaska compared its Centralized Correspondence Course (CCS) home study students with conventionally-schooled children on Alaska Statewide Assessment (ASA) tests for fourth and eighth graders in March 1985. Fourth-grade

home schoolers averaged 11 percent higher in math and 16 percent higher in reading. Eighth graders scored 12 percent higher in both math and reading. A month later on the national Survey of Basic Skills, CCS students in all grades averaged in the top quartile. This is the third consecutive year---since such comparisons were undertaken--that CCS students have scored high. In Tennessee a state study found home-taught students to rate up to 31 percentile ranks higher than public school students" (Moore, 1987, pg. 12).

Although no studies have been found to oppose these research findings on the cognitive outcomes of home schooling, Schmidt (1989) reports that professional educators question the data claiming the results are without verification.

"The academic accomplishments of homeschoolers which have been consistently superior from the very first are extremely valuable for use in legislatures, courts, and with doubters. Yet we hesitate to dwell on these high scores lest we be perceived to value them too highly or cause parent educators to lose sight of their more important goals, such as character traits, love of learning, creativity and practical skills" (The Moore Report, November/December 1990).

AFFECTIVE OUTCOMES OF HOME SCHOOLING

Bliss (1989) writes, "Many who choose home education are interested in the positive, proper social development possible for their children" (pg. 56).

Moore (1984) states, "This pervasive idea that children are better socialized and adjusted if they are constantly surrounded by their peers is an extravagant myth. You know there is positive socialization and negative socialization. The child who has been taught at home, who feels needed and wanted, who knows he is depended on at home---sharing responsibilities and chores--is much more likely to develop a sense of self-worth and a stable value system which is the basic ingredient for positive sociability" (pg. 824).

Bronfenbrenner (1975), Professor of Child Development and Family Studies at Cornell University, conducted studies of children in the sixth grade and grades below. The studies indicate that those children who spent more time with their peers than with their parents developed a dependency on an age-segregated peer group. Dr. Bronfenbrenner warned that the child who is peer dependent experiences diminishment of optimism,

self-direction, and acquires distrust for parental sensibilities. It was predicted that children who were removed from association with their parents and other adults would display a proclivity toward alienation, indifference, antagonism, and violence.

Taylor's (1986) research suggests that a higher self concept was exhibited among home schooled children than the self concept displayed among their public schooled peers. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was administered to a national sampling of home schooled children in grades four through twelve. Among the findings: 77.7 percent of the home schooled children ranked in the top quartile, with over half of them reaching the top ten percent. Only 10.3 percent of the home schoolers scored below the norm. Taylor writes, "The self-concept of home-schooling children is significantly higher than that of children attending the conventional school. Regarding socialization, it appears that very few home-schooling children are socially deprived" (pg. 97).

Ballman (1987) concludes, "Home schooled children tend to radiate a higher degree of self-respect and confidence because of three main factors: 1.) absence of peer criticism and dependency, 2.) parental nearness,

and 3.) parental monitoring and encouragement" (pg. 68).

Delahooke (1986) conducted a comparative study between privately schooled children and home schooled children using the Roberts Apperception Test for Children (RATC). The findings suggested that home schooled children demonstrated a strong social and emotional adjustment, and were less peer-oriented than the children who were privately schooled.

Williams (1990) found that Ohio home school parents and their children were involved in religious, social, cultural, and educational activities outside the home school setting. These opportunities provided for frequent social interactions. Ohio home school parents do not identify themselves with social isolates.

Montgomery (1986), in a study conducted with students from ten to twenty-one years old, found that home schooled individuals participated regularly in activities contributing to their leadership abilities.

Williams (1990), using the Torrace Tests of Creative Thinking-Figural Form A (TTCT), measured the creativity of children who were schooled at home. The average scores of the home schooled children were significantly higher than the national norms on three out of five subscales and the global mean of the TTCT.

Ballman (1987) postulates, "One of the distinctive advantages of home schooling is the close control of destructive peer ridicule and criticism. In a warm home environment a young child is free to be creative instead of faddish, initiating instead of peer reliant, and individualistic instead of age-mate cloned" (pg. 69).

Ray (1990) hypothesizes that the "high value consistency" and "social capital" present in home schooling families can be used as a determining factor to explain the achievement outcomes of a home schooling education.

"It is evident that children exposed to home schooling experience a high degree of value consistency. The values to which such children are exposed in education are those of their families. This would seem to encourage a high degree of social capital, a strong interest on the part of the parent in developing intensive and warm relations with the child" (Ray, 1990).

Webb (1989) examined aspects of the adult lives of people who were entirely or partly educated at home. The report indicates that all prior home schoolers who attempted higher education were academically successful. The presence of prejudice in hiring practices toward job

applicants with a background of home education was not evident. The socialization of these home-educated people was often more competent than that of their peers who had been conventionally educated.

Moore (1982) posits, "This success should not be surprising in view of several factors that any objective observer can readily understand:

1. Home schools are characterized by parents who have enough concern for their children to take on the task of systematically teaching them.

2. Parents provide a partiality that young children need, but schools cannot allow.

3. Children thrive on routines that involve a few children who share the same family values.

4. The child in the home school daily experiences from ten to a hundred times as many personal adult-to-child responses as he would in a formal school; such responses--along with adult example--mean educational power far more than do books.

5. Without the all-day regimentation of the classroom the child becomes more of a free explorer and thinker than a restricted regurgitator of books, which to him are often more barriers than facilitators of learning.

6. Parents who bring their children with them into the responsibilities of the home turn out independent, self-directed children" (pg. 372).

HOME SCHOOLING AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Burgess (1985) extrapolates that contact between public school administrators and home schooling families is likely to increase.

A growing number of educational researchers urge cooperation between home schooling families and the public school authorities (Divoky, 1983; Gustavsen, 1980; Lindley, 1985; Wartes, 1987).

Gustavsen (1980) recommends, "Public school administrators at local and intermediate school district levels ought to review their attitudes and procedures toward home schools established within their jurisdiction. More positive attitudes can be sought, and attempts made to assure quality home education by professional guidance and resource support, rather than attempts to hinder the home school education by open or covert opposition" (pg. 151).

SUMMARY

In a summary of the review of the existing literature referring to the home schooling movement in the United States, indications reveal that home schooling procedures were present in Colonial family life even before the drawing up of the American Constitution. Its academic contributions and benefits have been present throughout the growth of America. Home schooling has achieved the distinction of an honorable identity in the annals of American scholarship and education.

From the body of research, reports, surveys, and directed inquiries, it can be generally ascertained that parents who home school their children have established themselves as authentic members of their communities and nation. Generally, typical home schooling parents are more affluent, have acquired higher levels of education, have more children, and attend church more consistently than the average American family.

Priority motivations for families who home school their children favor the following factors and controls: religious convictions, academic excellence, character

and moral training, strengthening the unity of the family, and providing positive socialization.

Research into the outcomes of home schooling education reveals that the test scores of home educated children have equaled or surpassed their public school peers on standardized measurements in the areas of academic achievement, self concept, creativity, and emotional adjustment.

It has been suggested by those who have diligently investigated the field of home education that both entities of academia strive for greater compatibility, and review current conflictual attitudes for the purpose of improving the quality of education in both sectors: home and public schooling.

A review of the literature on home schooling practices disclosed few references to home schooling parent support groups.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

NATURALISTIC INQUIRY

A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The research design followed to investigate the concerns and functions of home schooling parent support groups in Kansas was drawn from the theoretical work of Yvonna S. Lincoln in the book Naturalistic Inquiry (1985). Given the paucity of research on home schooling parent support groups, the research design for naturalistic inquiry provided a suitable "fit" for the subject under investigation and resulted in an integrated product. The vocabulary used in describing methodology, the concepts of research which were followed, and the characteristics named are attributed to Lincoln.

The naturalistic method of study provided an appropriate framework within which to investigate the home schooling parent support groups in Kansas. The brief overview which follows will serve to summarize Lincoln's work and will set the research mode within which the investigation took place.

FOURTEEN CHARACTERISTICS OF NATURALISTIC INQUIRY

Characteristic 1: Natural setting

The naturalist chooses to carry out research in a natural setting. It is believed that a more holistic picture will emerge if the phenomena are seen in context. "The whole is more than the sum of its parts."

Characteristic 2: Human instrument

The naturalist chooses to use an experiential mode of data gathering rather than traditional paper and pencil tests. The human instrument is resourceful in adapting to unexpected circumstances. It is flexible in adjusting to variations in reality as they occur. This is especially valuable when entering a field where "one does not know what one does not know." Paper and pencil instruments are useful when "one knows what one does not know." The human instrument is in a position to identify areas of importance as they emerge.

Characteristic 3: Utilization of tacit knowledge

The naturalist recognizes that much of the interaction between the investigator and the object or respondent occurs at the sensate or intuitive level, and argues for the legitimacy of tacit knowledge.

Characteristic 4: Qualitative methods

The naturalist chooses to use qualitative methods of data gathering, specifically the interview, observation, and analysis of primary documents. These methods are adaptable to dealing with an unexplored field; they are sensitive to the many value patterns and mutual shapings that may be encountered in the field; they expose more directly the nature of the interaction between the investigator and the respondent.

Characteristic 5: Purposive sampling

The naturalist favors purposive sampling. The intention is to increase the scope and range of data uncovered. Purposive sampling takes into account local conditions, local mutual shapings, and local values. A variety of designs for

purposive sampling are available:

(a) sampling extreme or deviate cases
(b) sampling typical cases
(c) maximum variation sampling
(d) sampling critical cases
(e) sampling politically important cases
(f) convenience sampling

(Lincoln, pg. 102)

Characteristic 6: Inductive data analysis

Conventional studies define data in relation to a theory which has been pre-selected. Data are to be characteristics of variables or relationships of variables held within the theory.

Since theory emerges from the data in naturalistic inquiry, the naturalist must analyze data inductively. Sources of data are interviews, observations, and analysis of primary materials. Raw units of data are analyzed into categories of information. From these categories, a working hypothesis is defined.

Characteristic 7: Grounded theory

The naturalist chooses this method of research because no *a priori* theory concerning home schooling parent support groups is believed to provide a suitable "fit" to the reality under

investigation. *A priori* theory imposes its own generalities on the data gathered. The naturalist believes the theory should emerge from the data gathered, and such theory is more likely to reflect accurately the values found on the site.

Characteristic 8: Emergent design

Instead of constructing the design *a priori*, the naturalist allows the design of the research to flow out of the reality encountered. In this instance, not enough is known about the phenomena to allow for an informed "fit" between the realities encountered in the field, and the design used to investigate that reality. The naturalist accepts that not enough is sufficiently known, and that the interaction between investigator and the phenomenon is unpredictable.

Characteristic 9: Negotiated outcomes

The naturalist believes the respondent can best understand and evaluate the meaning of data. For this reason, member checks are conducted at every stage of the investigation to establish

compatibility between the meaning of data and the human resource from which the data has been drawn.

For example, when concluding an interview, the investigator summarizes major points and asks, "Does this sound right to you?" Specific working hypotheses are verified and confirmed by people from the context to which they apply. Both formal and informal member checks are carried out throughout the project. When the draft is complete, it is submitted to a member of the group investigated for a final opportunity to test for factual and interpretative accuracy. Member checking helps establish the trustworthiness of the work.

Characteristic 10: Case study reporting mode

The case study is likely to be the method of presenting data. The case study allows for the thick description necessary for making application to other situations. The case study is adaptive to reporting the multiple realities which may be encountered.

Characteristic 11: Ideographic interpretation

Rather than developing generalizations, the naturalist states the case in terms of the particulars of the site. Interpretation of data depends heavily upon local values, particular investigator-respondent interaction, and the contextual factors involved. Therefore, an ideographic interpretation is most accurate.

Characteristic 12: Tentative application

The extent to which the investigator's findings may be applied elsewhere depends upon the similarity of the contexts. The investigator's obligation is to describe in detail the studied site. A determination of transferability to another site could be made by another party. An investigator can make no claim of transferability for findings based on data from the studied context alone.

Characteristic 13: Focus-determined boundaries

The naturalist sets boundaries of the study on

the basis of the focus which emerges from the data. This permits the reality to define the focus, rather than utilizing the pre-conceived ideas of the investigator to guide the study.

Characteristic 14: Special criteria for trustworthiness

The criteria related to trustworthiness in conventional research (internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity) are inconsistent with naturalistic inquiry. The naturalistic approach establishes trustworthiness through the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

METHOD OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to conduct a naturalistic inquiry into the concerns and functions of home schooling parent support groups in Kansas as perceived by their leaders. Tenets were established which describe home schooling parent support groups by an analysis of characteristics found in common among the various local groups.

Most of the requirements of a research hypothesis could not be met because the naturalistic inquiry is largely emergent. However, assumptions were made by the investigator:

1. That this would be a generative inquiry which would discover constructs which would lead to propositions or descriptive characteristics.
2. That specific norms, attitudes, processes, tenets, constructions, and culture would emerge.
3. That these elements could be categorized by content analysis.
4. That statements could be written to define and describe such categories.
5. That these statements would define the concerns and functions of home schooling parent support groups in Kansas.

POPULATION

The population for this investigation included all members of known home schooling parent support groups in Kansas.

Eighteen local home schooling parent support groups were listed in the Kansans for Alternative Education Newsletter (Oct. 1990). A separate listing of home schooling parent support groups provided by the editor of the Teaching Parents Association Newsletter in Wichita revealed eight additional parent support groups. This totaled to twenty-six known support groups

networked across the physiographic provinces of Kansas.

The number of families represented in the support groups is in constant flux. In February, 1991, one thousand, three hundred and forty-nine non-accredited private schools were registered with the Kansas State Board of Education. By using the findings of Gustavsen (1980) that approximately one half of home schooling parents belong to a support organization, it could be determined that six hundred seventy-five families would join home schooling parent support groups in Kansas. However, in 1991, when leaders from eleven of the twenty-six known home schooling parent support groups reported the number of families in their support organizations, membership totaled approximately one thousand, three hundred.

Included in the eleven support groups interviewed were groups from the three major urban areas of Kansas: Wichita, Kansas City, and Topeka. This represents a disproportionate number of home schooling families per support group, since the majority of Kansas counties are rural or sparsely populated.

There are two home schooling support group newsletters in Kansas that have state-wide readership. The Kansans for Alternative Education Newsletter has

seven hundred fifty families on its subscription roles. The Teaching Parents Association Newsletter is subscribed to by seven hundred families. Given some duplication on mailing lists, the approximate population could be determined at one thousand, four hundred families who receive a support group newsletter.

SAMPLE SELECTION

Prior to the beginning of this investigation the following elements of sample selection in naturalistic inquiry were addressed:

1. Providing for identification of initial elements of the sample.
2. Providing for an orderly emergence of the sample.
3. Providing for continuous refinement or focusing of the sample.
4. Providing for termination.

These objectives were met as follows:

1. Providing for identification of initial elements of the sample.

The initial sample consisted of leaders or designees of the local home schooling parent support groups as listed in the state newsletter for home

schooling families. The October 1990 issue of Kansans for Alternative Education Newsletter designated eighteen local home schooling parent support groups, their association name (where appropriate), and the name and phone number of the person to contact if you "...are interested in a support group or other home schoolers in your area." (Kansans for Alternative Education, Oct. 1990).

The first interview was scheduled with a "gatekeeper" in the home schooling movement in Kansas, Bonnie Sawyer.

In 1984, Bonnie Sawyer founded Kansans for Alternative Education. She is the editor of the Kansans for Alternative Education Newsletter. Sawyer verified the sample list and agreed to the use of her name in a contact letter to the leaders of the individual local home schooling groups. She suggested that another network of local home schooling parent support groups could be found through the Teaching Parent Association Newsletter.

An examination of the thirteen home schooling parent support groups listed with the Teaching Parent Association revealed some duplication with the original sample. The sample was restructured to

include interviews with leaders from home schooling parent support groups listed in the Teaching Parent Association Newsletter.

2. Provide for an orderly emergence of the sample.

Designees from groups within the sample were chosen utilizing the maximum variation sampling technique. Criteria for "divergence" were developed and home schooling parent support groups which exemplified the criteria were systematically interviewed. The categories were:

Religious----------Secular

Urban----------Rural

Newly formed----------Older

Directive structure----Non-directive structure

Sampling was made from each of the geographical areas in Kansas.

Interviews were conducted with recognized leaders from eleven of the twenty-six known home schooling parent support groups as listed in the two state-wide newsletters. Among the leaders were two certified teachers in the state of Kansas, a third

held a master's degree in curriculum and instruction, and another taught in a Christian school. Others were an attorney at law, two farm wives, and the holder of a black belt in karate.

The three more leaders instructed at the university level: one was an expert on Middle Eastern affairs, the second was a CPA who taught accounting, and the third instructed in math.

The following eight statements demonstrate the orderly emergence of the sample. Each site is described, and criteria for divergence are alleged to be present by directly quoting the home schooling parent support group leaders.

Religious: Site 15

This parent support group is located in a predominantly university town in mid-Kansas. It originated in 1985 when several parents at a local church began educating their children at home. This Christian support group of twenty-five to thirty families requests a statement of faith as part of membership. In describing its goals, the leader stated, "I think that if you asked the families that are involved, their highest goal is to educate their

children in the ways of God. We certainly want all of our children to be well educated, and be well prepared for life on their own when they are married and have their own children, and in their careers. I feel strongly about home education as a vehicle to obey God in our lives. That's why I do it."

Secular: Site 14

An organized group of home schooling parents with prevailing secular orientation was almost non-existent. One recently disbanded secular home schooling parent support group was located in a university town on the Konza Prairie.

The founder of this group placed an ad in a local newspaper and five families responded to it. They took turns volunteering to plan weekly educational events for their home schooled children.

Inquiry learning was stressed in these activities. The spokesperson for the group says, "Learning is so much process. We are our children's teachers. Taking them out of the home for six or so hours a day, and telling them that that is where they are learning is ridiculous. They learn all their lives, and they learn everywhere. It is a very artificial distinction--you

learn here, and you don't learn there. School is more sacrosanct than any political party, or the electoral college, or cooking, or diet, or anything. School is the one thing that is never questioned. The right wing fringe doesn't question it, but even the left wing fringe doesn't question the school. It is really interesting."

Urban: Site 1

In northeast Kansas are two hundred families who belong to an urban home schooling parent support group. The spokesperson for the group says the monthly meetings are, "...for the most part, geared strictly for the parents. It is to teach them or to help them do their job of teaching."

A newsletter sent to the members lists activities designed for children. They include public library programs, museum exhibits, children's theater, classes in gymnastics, meetings of the Audubon Society, sessions in equestrian arts, instruction in classical and contemporary keyboard, astronomy club meetings, dance classes, and home school pictures.

The spokesperson for this group explains the need for smaller groups within the organization. "We got so

large that it was difficult to be very personal. So they divided into cluster groups to go on field trips, to be more personal support, to try to help new people who come along."

Rural: Site 4

In the sparsely populated counties of the High Plains in the northwestern quarter of Kansas, forty-five to fifty families belong to a home schooling parent support group. Because some members drive as many as ninety miles to attend a monthly "meeting," these events are scheduled as day-long multi-purpose educational affairs. "We have done a prairie day where we had mountaineers come in and tell us how to make arrow heads. We had someone come in who has sheep and spins wool, and the kids got to do that."

The isolation of these rural home schooling families is offset by meeting in small cluster groups with the four or five families nearest them. "We have put on plays, and sung songs, or something crazy. We had P.E. where we had a big earth ball, and a parachute, and things that the kids usually don't get to work with. When you get the children together, of course you get the parents together, and sometimes it is for support

and encouragement, but basically it is because it is good for the children."

Newly Formed: Site 13

In the fall of 1990, in Southeast Kansas, fifteen to seventeen families formed a home schooling parent support group. Of the families, only one had home schooled before. The leader of this group said, "We have planned each meeting around a particular academic subject, and we ask each person to bring the curriculum that they were using, explain it to the group, and then lay it out for everybody to look at. So it is kind of a curriculum fair, I guess, in miniature. One subject each time."

They meet once a month, allowing the children to play in a church playground while the parents clarify individual learning goals for this new venture. "We don't have time to look beyond to a larger focus. Right now we are just concerned with the nuts and bolts of schooling."

Older: Site 6

In 1980, "back in the days when there was a

legitimate fear of legal prosecution," four home schooling moms began meeting in each other's houses. This home schooling parent support group, located in a city of 300,000 in Southeast Kansas, has grown to incorporate five hundred families. There is no written constitution nor by-laws, no elected officers, no requirements of membership. Though the leadership reveals a Christian influence, the group welcomes all home schoolers.

One reason given for the noticeable growth is the visibility of the group. The leader explains, "If you are afraid to stick your neck up, you can't get together and socialize very easily. You can't go out and hire instructors to teach your classes for you when you don't want to teach them yourself. You can't go out and organize field trips and be forthright about where you are coming from, who you are, and why you are there. The visibility thing is tied directly into credibility."

Directive Structure: Site 7

One home schooling parent support group of forty to fifty families is governed by an elected board. To become a member of this support group, a home schooling family must present in written form a philosophy,

purpose, and goals for its home school. An interview is then conducted by a leader of the group. An orientation meeting for new families is attended. The family agrees to report the number of educational hours and type of activities conducted by its school to the coordinator of the group. The leader explained, "Everybody in the program submits reports to the coordinator as a measure of accountability. And if there is a problem with a family who is not keeping up their activities, and their time, then the coordinator is there to kind of help them with that. If the family is not serious, then the family is just not allowed to continue in the program."

This accountability is seen as protective credibility in a climate of "very subjective determinations" when interpreting Kansas law regarding non-accredited private schools.

The spokesperson goes on to say, "We just try to help them as much as possible. We don't want people to feel that we are trying to control what they do, or tell them how they have to do it, we just want to help them do the best job they can. And that is our intention."

Non-directive Structure: Site 10

Each August, twelve to fourteen home schooling families from the farming communities of Central Kansas' Smoky Hill area are called together for a "back to school picnic."

The spokesperson for the group described its organizational structure. "Usually at the first meeting the moms just get together and say, 'What do we want to do?' And we just take calendars and plan different events, and that is just kind of the way we do it."

They do not write newsletters. They have not developed a constitution, by-laws or written philosophy. They elect no officers and have no stipulated requirements of membership.

"This year we talked about, 'We really should have a name.' See, this is how loosely organized we are. Our group has really grown, and we still don't have a name."

3. Provide for the continuous refinement and focusing of the sample.

Salient elements of home schooling parent support groups were identified through intensive interviews at the preceding divergent sites. After

six interviews, the element of repetition was noticed. The initial sampling technique was expanded in pursuit of wider focus. A new class of respondent was recruited for one interview. During the observation of a state-wide seminar, the main speaker was interviewed because of the particular dimension that he offered.

The speaker was a leader who is a committed, accepted, and legitimate member within the local context. However, he displayed training, experience, and biases more extensive than those originally encountered in the preliminary sample. He had no alliance with a geographically bounded support group. His contributions and expertise in home schooling gave him an overview of the support groups in the state.

By interviewing this leader, the inquirer sought to alter or validate the focus in the categories which so rapidly formed in the earlier interviews.

Information was sought concerning the scope and authenticity of the emerging focus of the study. Analytic categories, interpretations, and acceptability of tentative findings were tested with this member of the home schooling community.

The remaining local support group leaders in the initial sample continued to be interviewed.

Categorizing of data was concurrent with ongoing interviews. This continuous data collection-processing sequence allowed for follow-up on categories showing sufficient presence to indicate validity, yet which were insufficient to furnish cause for inclusion in the data report.

4. Provide for termination.

"The criterion invoked to determine when to stop sampling is informational redundancy, not a statistical confidence level" (Lincoln, pg. 202).

Guba (1978) suggests four rules to guide the "stop" decision in data gathering:

1. Exhaustion of sources
2. Saturation of categories
3. Emergence of regularities
4. Overextension

After ten or so interviews, redundancy occurred and new information had become scarce. The categories were saturated with information.

There was no emergence of new regularities. Member checking and category testing validated the

regularities found in previous interviews.

Triangulation with observed sites and primary documents revealed a cohesiveness among identified categories.

The additional information which surfaced was extraneous. It was inapplicable to the conceptual mandates of the previously established categories. This plethora of new content was unfocused and did not appreciably contribute to creating categories.

This study confirmed Lincoln's (1985) statement that, "When interviewing members of a particular group, it is usual to find that a dozen or so interviews, if properly selected, will exhaust most available information" (pg. 235).

DATA COLLECTION

The three primary modes of data collection were interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Interviews were conducted during the months of April and May of 1991. The purpose of these interviews was to discover the functions and concerns of home schooling parent support groups.

The interviews were tape recorded in order to

preserve fidelity and to facilitate an audit. Open-ended questions were used in the initial phase of the interviewing process. In later phases, the interviews became more directed as informational categories of concerns and functions emerged and achieved saturation.

In order to establish the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation of information was provided through observation and document analysis.

Observations of home school parent association activities were conducted at four sites during the months of April and May, 1991:

(1.) a two-day seminar conducted by *Kansans for Alternative Education*. This teaching seminar was held in Scott City, Kansas. There were one hundred participants, the majority of whom were from the scattered farming communities in the western half of the state (Appendix A: Seminar Workshop Topics).

(2.) a fine arts fair in an urban setting in Northeast Kansas. About seventy parents, relatives, and friends attended this event which showcased the talents and achievements of home schooled children. The students displayed art work, pottery, metal sculpture, needlepoint, carpentry projects, mechanical contrivances, origami, renaissance costuming and heraldry, paper maché forms, and samples of penmanship. There were performances of singing, violin playing, piano solo and duet work, poetry declamation, a speech on "How to Separate an Egg," and an original presentation on "The Life and Music of Handel."

(3.) a field trip to a newspaper publisher. Twelve children and seven mothers toured an award winning newspaper publishing facility in

Central Kansas. After the tour, the group visited the home of one home schooler. Mothers shared home schooling experiences while the children played outside.

(4.) a teaching seminar and curriculum fair sponsored by an urban home schooling support group in Southeast Kansas. Five hundred people were present to hear the featured speaker. Half the number identified themselves as new home schoolers or parents interested in beginning to home school (Appendix B: Seminar Workshop Topics).

Two home schooling parent support group newsletters are circulated throughout Kansas. The Kansans for Alternative Education Newsletter and the Teaching Parents Association Newsletter were analyzed by tallying the frequency of various subject presentations.

Both the quantitative dimension and the qualitative dimension were assessed and compared to the emerging patterns in the field data. The functions and concerns noted at the observation sites and those published in the newsletters confirmed the information gathered in the interviews.

To maintain the integrity of the study, an audit trail was developed during data collection. It included:

(1.) the date of the interviews and observations;
(2.) the identification of interviewee and setting;
(3.) the complete transcription of interview notes and audio recording;
(4.) notes and primary documents gathered at observation sites; and

(5.) copies of the newsletters.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis and data gathering were parallel, ongoing processes.

Two activities were involved in data analysis: unitizing and categorizing.

Lincoln (1985) describes four stages through which data analysis typically passes. These four stages are:

(1.) Comparing incidents to each category
(2.) Integrating categories and their properties
(3.) Delimiting the theory
(4.) Writing the theory

(1.) Comparing incidents to each category:

Each taped interview was transcribed. Units of information were selected from the typed material. These units of information were brief entities of data which were non-dependent upon context. The units were able to be clearly interpreted without any additional information.

The units were sorted into categories, at first on the basis of experiential association. As raw data emerged, definitive properties became more obvious and

specific. Theoretical properties suitable to each category began to emerge.

(2.) Integrating categories and their properties:

Category properties became explicit as categories experienced a continuous refinement. Relationships became evident. Since data collection and data analysis were conducted as a parallel process, interviews were utilized to make specific those elements in the data which were unfocused.

As data were integrated, a set of categories defining the functions and concerns of home schooling parent support groups became evident.

(3.) Delimiting the theory:

As major categories emerged, the options for discovering other categories decreased. The last data collected were specifically directed at gaining closure. The many original categories became subsumed, and resulted in a reduction of categories.

Three criteria were used to signal a "stop" to the process of data collection and analysis:

(1.) saturation of categories
(2.) emergence of regularities
(3.) overextension

(4.) Writing the theory:

The findings of this study are contained in Chapter Four. The data suggest that home schooling parent support groups provide for their member families such diverse services as legal and legislative information, support and encouragement, a variety of group activities for children, new family orientation, and information concerning curriculum and teaching methods.

ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS

The trustworthiness criteria of conventional research (internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity) are incompatible with naturalistic inquiry. The naturalistic approach establishes trustworthiness by the following criteria:

(1.) credibility
(2.) transferability
(3.) dependability
(4.) confirmability

Lincoln (1985) offers activities to achieve trustworthiness in each of these areas. In conducting this study, these methods were employed to sustain the integrity of the work.

(1.) Credibility:

Four activities are especially useful in establishing credibility: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation of sources, and member checks.

The first two activities, prolonged engagement and persistent observation, were met by this researcher after deciding to explore the home schooling parent support groups in Kansas.

Following a family consultation, it was decided to enter the field under investigation by conducting a home schooling program for an eleven year old son. Upon arranging for a year's sabbatical from teaching in a public junior high school, this investigator contacted the Kansas State Department of Education's Accreditation Department for information concerning home schooling. A file was mailed which listed several non-accredited private schools in the area.

An initial phone call to one home schooling family provided the investigator with a contact to a home schooling parent support group leader. The leader mailed a reading list and dates for curriculum seminars. He suggested attendance at the August home schooling parent support group's "back to school picnic."

The home schooling parent support group leader advised that for legal credibility, academic accountability, and record maintenance, our home school be established in collaboration with other home schooling families under the name Great Commission Academy. Parent support group members advised standardized testing for the home schooling pupil before starting to home school to establish an academic baseline from which progress could be evaluated through retesting at yearly intervals. Curriculum was selected from an established publisher of home school materials.

As the first home schooling year began, various members of the support group called at regular intervals to offer experiential counseling and encouragement concerning record keeping, lesson planning, and general success.

After a term as a home schooling parent and as an acceptable member of the home schooling community, this researcher was able to establish the integrity and objectivity of her investigation among other families who home school, and with various leaders of the home schooling parent support groups.

Triangulation of information was provided by using three different methods of data gathering: interviews,

observation, and document analysis.

The researcher engaged in member checks during the data gathering process and after the writing was completed.

(2.) Transferability:

The concept of transferability is not directly analogous to the establishment of external validity in a conventional study. The naturalist provides descriptions accompanied by a careful analysis of the time and place in which the details were found to be valid. The judgment of whether or not the description is applicable to another context is determined by the individual making the application. To be authentic, this judgment is dependent on the similarity of contexts. It is the responsibility of the naturalist researcher to provide a deep background which makes possible an informed judgment of transferability.

(3.) Dependability:

To verify that fair and complete methodology was employed throughout this investigation, an audit trail has been kept. An audit to establish dependability can be done by examining the materials for process used in

this investigation.

(4.) Confirmability:

An audit for confirmability could be performed to examine the product of the research by using the audit trail compiled during the research. The product would include findings, data treatment, interpretations, and recommendations.

LIMITATIONS

Delimitations of the study include restriction to home schooling parent support groups in Kansas. Transferability is determined on the basis of the context to which the findings of the study will be applied, and the similarity of that context to Kansas. The findings of this study are restricted to Kansas home schooling parent support groups. However, this should not be perceived as a severe limitation due to the similarity of the area to other states.

The study is limited in that it is applicable specifically to home schooling parent support groups in Kansas and may or may not relate to the experience of

home schooling parent support groups in other geographical areas.

CHAPTER FOUR

PART ONE: THE CASE STUDY

HOME SCHOOLING IN KANSAS

In the 1840's and 1850's, thousands of families migrated from the east along the Oregon trail toward the west in search of gold, silver, and land. Because of hardships, privations, and disease, many never reached their desired destination. Upon reaching Kansas, some remained to farm the rich prairie soil.

When Kansas became a territory of the United States in 1854, its population was about fifteen hundred settlers, comprised mostly of Christian missionaries and government agents who worked among the indigenous Native American population.

The education of children, although intrinsic to family life, became a procedure of diminishing importance in comparison to the attention given to frontier survival. The need to survive replaced the need to become literate. Although the education of children was sporadic, inconsistent, and lacking in structured continuity, the education of the child

remained a significant issue.

"In 1855, when Kansas was still a territory, her first school laws were adopted by a proslavery legislature...It is interesting to note that, even this early, education of children was considered a matter of importance" (Swanson, 1922).

In the first legislation enacted in the territory, legal provision was made for the education of apprentices. Every master craftsman who accepted an orphan or child indentured into apprenticeship by an indigent family was held responsible for educating the child in reading, writing, and arithmetic, "the compound rules and the rules of three" (Swanson, 1922).

In January, 1861, the United States Congress passed An Act for the Admission of Kansas Into the Union. Kansas became the thirty-fourth state in the Union. The continuing concern for education for the children of Kansas was demonstrated through Article 6 of the Constitution of the State of Kansas. Article 6: Section 1 provided for a state superintendent of public instruction and a county superintendent of public instruction. The state superintendent was to have general supervision of the common school funds. Eighteen years later, a staff was provided for the state

superintendent.

By 1870, dozens of small towns were established on the prairies of eastern Kansas. Commerce in meat packing, coal mining, and other industries brought an increase of population into Kansas necessitating the instituting of common school districts.

As railroad companies expanded westward, towns quickly developed along their lines, and one room school houses were constructed to accommodate the children of the frontier. Due to a continuing expansion of the populace, Kansas was apportioned into additional counties and collateral school districts were organized.

Though the Common Law held that it was mandatory upon parents to provide an education for their children, no method to enforce this parental obligation was in effect. Thus, based upon the state's implied authority in the province of education and the Common Law doctrine of parens patriae, the Kansas legislature in 1874 enacted the state's first compulsory school law. Of particular importance to the parents of children deemed to be of legal school age was the provision that a child or children could be taught at home.

The Kansas Compulsory School Law of 1874 stated in Section 1640:

> "Children to attend school. That every parent, guardian, or other person in the state of Kansas, having control of any child or children between the ages of eight and fourteen years, shall be required to send such child or children to a public school or a private school, taught by a competent instructor, for a period of at least twelve weeks in each year, six weeks of which time shall be consecutive, unless such child or children are excused from such attendance by the board of the school district, or the board of education of the city in which such parent, guardian, or person having control resides, upon its being shown to their satisfaction that such parent or guardian was not able, by reason of poverty, to clothe such child properly, or that such child's bodily or mental condition has been such as to prevent his attendance at school or application to study for the period required, or that such child or children are taught at home in such branches as are usually taught in the public schools, subject to the same examination as other pupils of the district or city in which the child resides, or that he has already acquired the ordinary branches required by law, or that there is no school taught within two miles by the nearest traveled road. (L. 1874, Ch. 123, Sec. 1; August 1). (Underlining for emphasis)

Required curriculum was instituted by territorial legislation. King, writing for the Kansas Historical Society in 1907, states, "The statutes since 1858 have enumerated the subjects that must be taught in the common schools, giving to the board power to require others. The enactment of 1858 declared that 'in every school district there shall be taught orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography and arithmetic.' The session statutes of 1885 added to the

list physiology and hygiene, requiring that they should be taught 'with special reference to the effects of alcoholic stimulants and narcotics'" (pg. 3).

In 1903, Kansas law enabled the public school system to enforce compulsory school attendance. King (1907) writes, "Under the truancy law of 1903 all is very different.....To enforce this law, the county superintendent divides his county, exclusive of first- and second-class cities, into not less than one nor more than five districts. Over each of these districts he places a truant officer....That the law is effectively enforced is shown by the fact that, in 1906-07, 4494 pupils were sent or returned to school, while in 1907-08 this number reached 4728" (pg. 10).

A school director or president of the board who had been apprised of a violation of the compulsory school law, yet failed to prosecute the offender, was liable for a fine from twenty to fifty dollars upon conviction (Secs. 6421 and 6422 of the 1901 General Statutes of Kansas).

Brought before the Kansas Supreme Court in 1915, the first case in regard to the compulsory attendance law was THE STATE OF KANSAS V. JOHN WILL. Kester (1984) cites and summarizes this particular case in a report to

the Kansas State Board of Education. "The allegations of the information showed that the defendant was a resident of Common School District No. 13 in Harvey County that operated an eight months' school beginning in September, 1915. He was the father of eleven year old Henry Will whom he enrolled in said school. In April, 1916, before the school term was to end in May, the defendant removed his son from the public school and entered him in a two months' private German school that would end in June. The private school was taught by a competent instructor. However, instead of teaching all of the usual branches of education, the private school taught German reading, German grammar, German spelling, German writing, Bible history and a small amount of arithmetic" (pg. 6).

Since the private school was "of but two months duration...which private school (did) not teach all of the branches of education and subjects required by law to be taught in a public school" (State V. Will, 99 Kan. 167, 168 (1916)), the court ruled against John Will. It stated:

> "May we not assume that the legislature knew what it was about when it provided in the earlier act that if the child were taught at home it must be in the common-school branches and that the child should be subject to examination as other district and city pupils might be. This provision would serve a

> useful and almost necessary purpose to prevent a mere pretense of home instruction to avoid the consequences of the truancy law. In the later act, it will be observed that home instruction is no longer an excuse for nonattendance in school, but the number and kind of schools to which he may be sent are enlarged." (Underlining for emphasis)

In 1919, the Kansas legislative session enacted three statutes which had a telling impact on schooling children at home. "The law of 1919, arising out of the World War, required absolutely that all teaching in public, private and parochial schools be in the English language only" (Swanson, 1922). In addition to the curriculum already proscribed, all schools were required to provide complete courses in history and citizenship.

The Kansas State Board of Education was endowed with the power to monitor classroom procedures in all sectors of education to determine that the stipulations of these acts were being fulfilled. If a school, whether private or public, were judged to be in a state of non-compliance, the board had the authority to prohibit its continuance.

Under an enforcement act passed in 1921, it became a criminal act for a school to be in violation of the laws passed in 1919:

> "72-1105. Violations of sections 72-1102, 72-1103. That any person who shall violate any of the provisions of the section 1 (72-1102) or 2 (72-

> 1103) of chapter 257 of the laws of 1919, being an act entitled "An act in relation to instruction in public, private, or parochial school, and providing for the enforcement thereof," either as a teacher in such school, or as a member of any district board, board of education, board of trustees, or other person or persons establishing or maintaining such school or schools in violation of said chapter 257 of the laws of 1919, shall be deemed guilty of misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars, or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period of not less than ten days nor more than ninety days, or by both such fine and imprisonment." (Underlining for emphasis)

(K.S.A. 72-1105, affiliated with chapter 257 of the laws of 1919 were repealed in 1943.)

Swanson, writing for the Kansas State Historical Society in 1922, summarizes Kansas law regarding education at that time. "This brief survey of the development of the educational system of Kansas indicates that the state, in a somewhat incoherent sort of way, attempted to express through its law the realization that education of its youth was of the utmost importance. Through the confusion of details of the laws upon education, only partially systematized and correlated, we see the development of certain fundamental principles--a state supervision and support of public schools; free schools for all children of school age; compulsory education; state uniformity of

textbooks; lengthened school term; extension of these standards of education to all children and increase of school period available; and, finally, a review of all that has been done in the past, with a conscious effort to attain to the most acceptable standards of excellency" (pg. 19).

Reflecting the significance of education to the citizenry of Kansas, Miller, Langsdorf, and Richmond (1961) write, "Institutions of higher learning in 1960 totaled five state universities and colleges, two municipal universities, 16 four-year private colleges, 14 public and five private junior colleges, and six unaccredited schools. In the fall of 1959, these institutions had a combined enrollment of approximately 50,000 students, not including those enrolled in correspondence study and in non-degree-credit work" (pg. 241).

It was also during this period of academic growth that a nationwide venture into alternative schools and home schooling education emerged with assiduous vigor. Long (1972) writes, "The alternative school movement started as a result of the failure of the public school to change as an institution. Promises of changing curriculums, new technology in the classroom, and new

knowledge of the learning process have scarcely begun to modify long-established classroom practices and attitudes" (pg. 62-63).

In 1963, the Kansas Supreme Court became involved in a case regarding home schooling that challenged the compulsory school attendance laws of Kansas. In the litigation of the STATE OF KANSAS V. MILDRED E. LOWRY AND RAY F. LOWRY the court again ruled against parents educating their children in the home in lieu of sending them to a public or private school, stating that, "When the minimum course requirements of 72-1103 are compared with the 'schedule' of instruction followed by Mrs. Lowry, it is quite apparent that Mrs. Lowry's 'schedule' does not meet the statutory requirements" (State V. Lowry, 191 Kan. 701, 703).

Kester (1984), in his report to the Kansas State Board of Education describes the Lowry's school. "In 1972, Dr. Ray F. Lowry was a practicing physician in El Dorado, Kansas, and Mildred E. Lowry, his wife, was the holder of a Kansas teacher's life certificate and had previously taught in the public schools of this state. They corresponded with state and local officials to learn what arrangements they could make to teach at home their four children who were in grades 3, 4, 6 and 7.

In September, 1962, they failed to enroll their children in school, and the superintendent of schools advised them they were in violation of the truancy law and they responded they were operating a private school. A room of the home was converted to a schoolroom. It was about 150 square feet and contained school equipment. The schedule of classes showed Mrs. Lowry taught Spanish, reading, music, arithmetic, spelling, and language arts. The pupils engaged in formal exercise, flag salute, and group activities. The district court concluded the Lowrys were not conducting a private school but were conducting a scheduled form of home training, and that the scheduled instruction was insufficient to meet statutory requirements" (pg. 8).

In the case of the STATE OF KANSAS V. MILDRED E. LOWRY AND RAY F. LOWRY, the court stated:

> "In the instant case the defendant's attempt to operate a private school resulted in mere scheduled home instruction, which is no longer an excuse for nonattendance in the schools of the types prescribed in the act."

In 1965, the legislature of Kansas altered the compulsory school law extending the eighth grade graduation requirement to include students up to the age of sixteen. This modification of the compulsory

attendance law was to become conflictual with the religious practices and educational aims of the Amish community in Kansas.

In the case of the STATE OF KANSAS V. LEROY GARBER the issue was one of Garber's constitutionally guaranteed religious rights. Garber belonged to the Old Order Amish Mennonite Church. Sharon Garber, his fifteen year old daughter had attended the Elreka public elementary school. After graduation from the eighth grade, Sharon was withdrawn from that public school.

In this case, Garber failed to comply with K.S.A. 72-1106 which specifically stated that a "school month shall consist of four (4) weeks of five (5) days each of six (6) hours per day on which pupils of a school are under direct supervision of its teacher or teachers while they are engaged in educational activities..."

Kester (1984) describes the circumstances of this case. "As a result of the 1965 legislature changing the upper age limit of the compulsory school law from eighth grade graduation to age sixteen, the Amish community at Yoder established the Harmony School. The framework of the school was patterned after a Pennsylvania law. Harmony School was limited to those children who had completed the eighth grade and had not reached age

sixteen. It was taught by an Amish farmer whose formal education consisted of taking the eight grades in the public school. Formal classes were held one morning each week, and the remaining four school days were spent at the homes of the pupils taking one hour in study and five hours in vocational training. All instruction was in the English language, except a German reading course using the German Bible. On October 5, 1965, the defendant was served with a statutory notice after the filing of an information against him of truancy, and Sharon was immediately enrolled in the Harmony School. He was convicted and fined.....The court held that defendant Garber was legally convicted of a misdemeanor and that his constitutional rights were not violated. As a result of his being convicted, Leroy Garber sold his farm and fled the state in order to avoid further persecution" (pg. 9).

The legislature has since repealed both specific time requirements and the course requirements for non-accredited schools. It now requires a "substantially equivalent" period of time.

In 1972, a similar case, WISCONSIN V. JONAS YODER, was decided by the United States Supreme Court. It upheld Mr. Yoder's claim that the compulsory school

attendance law violated his rights under the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.

Because of the effect of the ruling of the Kansas court in the State v. Garber on the Amish and Holdemen communities in Kansas, the State Commissioner of Education requested an opinion on the effect of the Yoder decision on the Kansas compulsory school attendance law. In August of 1972, the attorney general responded by stating, "This decision (Yoder) of the United States Supreme Court, in effect, reverses the basic holding of the Kansas court in State v. Garber ...with regard to the violation of the First Amendment rights by compulsory school attendance laws" (Kester, 1984, pg. 14).

In 1982, legislation was enacted which served as an impetus toward monitoring the home school movement, and from thence home schools were required to register with the Kansas State Department of Education as non-accredited private schools under the provisions of K.S.A. 72-53, 101.

> "72-53, 101. Non-accredited private school; registration of name and address required; state board of education, administration and duties.
>
> (a) The official custodian of every private elementary or secondary school shall register the name and address of the private elementary

or secondary school with the state board of education.

(b) The state board of education shall administer the provisions of this act and shall prepare and maintain a compilation of the registrations submitted under subsection (a).

(c) Upon transfer of a pupil from a private elementary or secondary school to a school district, an accredited nonpublic school, or another private elementary or secondary school, the state board of education, upon request of the school district, accredited nonpublic school, or other private elementary or secondary school therefor, shall make available the registration of the private elementary or secondary school from which the pupil transferred."

Kansas Statutes Annotated 72-111(a)(2) states:

"1. A home school must qualify as 'a private, denominational or parochial school taught by a competent instructor for a period of time which is substantially equivalent to the period of time the public school is maintained.'"

In 1982, three home schools registered as non-accredited private schools.

In 1983, the Kansas Supreme Court again ruled against instruction in the home. The home school cited IN THE INTEREST OF ANNA SAWYER, IN THE INTEREST OF MATTHEW SAWYER, 234 KAN. 436 is described by Kester (1984). "Tom and Bonnie Sawyer were the parents of Matthew Sawyer, aged eleven and a second grader, and Anna, aged eight and possibly also a second grader. They organized their own private school under the name

of Longview School, Inc., enrolled their children in it, and conducted school on a daily basis in their home for the 1982-83 school year. The school was registered with the Kansas State Board of Education, pursuant to K.S.A. 1982 Supp. 72-53, 101. Two siblings of Anna and Matthew, were ages four and twenty-two months and were in the home during instruction with Bonnie Sawyer being their babysitter. Mrs. Sawyer was the only teacher and Matthew and Anna were the only students enrolled in the school. Mrs. Sawyer did not have a degree, but did have one and one-half years of college and while at college had a 3.5 grade average. She also had no teaching experience" (pg. 16).

During the court proceedings it was revealed that the Sawyer home schooling instruction lasted half a day. The teaching schedule varied from day to day and did not conform to the conventional structure of class time as proffered by the public schools. There was evidence of minimum lesson planning.

The Kansas Supreme Court stated in its ruling IN THE INTEREST OF ANNA SAWYER, IN THE INTEREST OF MATTHEW SAWYER, 234 KAN. 436:

> "We find Sawyer's plan, though well intentioned, a thinly veiled subterfuge attacking compulsory

> school attendance. If such a family arrangement will serve as a substitute for school, there is no compulsory school attendance" (Kester, 1984, pg. 17).

The Kansas Attorney General's opinion on the case indicates that "...because Sawyer, supra, may be read to indicate that certain home instruction may constitute a 'private school' for purposes of the compulsory attendance law, it cannot automatically be assumed that all home instruction violates the compulsory school attendance law" (Attorney General Opinion No. 85-159).

In a discussion of home schooling in The Home School Court Report, Volume 6, Number 4, it was determined that legislation focused on truancy in the public schools imposes unanticipated difficulties on parents in Kansas who want to home school their children. "The biggest problem is the fact that by law 'truants' have to be turned over to the SRS (Social Rehabilitation Services) for an investigation to be followed with the SRS referring the family to the local prosecutor. This practice is unlike any other state, thus creating many complications when a home school family is contacted by the school district" (pg. 9).

In 1991, during this naturalistic inquiry into the concerns and functions of home schooling parent support

groups in Kansas, an interview was conducted with Bonnie Sawyer, editor of the Kansans for Alternative Education Newsletter. Sawyer, who had been involved in litigation in 1983, relates the general anxiety experienced by other home schoolers in Kansas after her case had been ruled against by the Kansas Supreme Court and her home school closed. She stated:

> "Basically, what everyone was doing was just keeping a very low profile. Don't tell anybody. Don't tell your relatives. Don't give my name to anybody. I don't want anybody to know."

In response to the general anxiety about the legal status of home schooling during the early 1980's, individual families began a grass roots home schooling parent support group movement. They were brought together for the purpose of providing each other encouragement and aid in a time of external pressure and legal conflict. Reports indicate that this conjoining is experienced by home schoolers throughout the nation. Grimes (1991) reports that the same is true in other states. "Many state organizations are born in the midst of legislative problems, which cause home educators to band together" (pg. 39).

In the eight years following the ruling on the

Sawyer case, many litigations, of differing home school circumstances, have been brought before the district courts in Kansas. The district courts of Marion County in 1985, Harvey County in 1984, Rawlins County in 1986, and Shawnee County in 1988, have struggled to determine appropriate specificities that define what constitutes a "school", and how to ascertain the qualifications that determine what is a "competent" teacher.

Though the circumstances in each of these non-accredited private home schools differed, they have been ruled as private schools under K.S.A. 72-1111. As district court cases, these do not set legal precedent.

Kansans for Alternative Education is a home schooling parent support group whose newsletter has a state-wide mailing list. It began in 1984 during a seminar on home schooling in Olathe, Kansas. Four hundred parents from both Missouri and Kansas attended the conference. Sawyer states:

> "At that first seminar we had a meeting instead of lunch. They said, 'Yes, we really do want to have this, but who do we want to be in charge?' And of course, not many people were willing to have their names plastered all over, and basically, I won it by default. I didn't care who knew my name. We had already been to court. What else could they do?"

In 1984, two hundred families were on the state-

wide mailing list for the Kansans for Alternative Education Newsletter. By 1990, the number of families on the mailing list had been increased to seven hundred fifty. The Teaching Parent Association Newsletter has a mailing list of seven hundred families and is subscribed to by the Wichita Public Library.

With the growth of the movement, members of the home schooling community are becoming more visible through radio and television interviews, news stories, and magazine articles.

As the home schooling movement expands in Kansas, autonomous local home schooling parent support groups are continuing to form in many public school districts. The challenge to deliver appropriate services to this diverse membership rests in a sensitive determination of the scope of their esoteric needs. An emerging perspective of the continuing amplification of the home schooling parent support groups is that they reflect an authentic segment in the panorama of American education.

This description of the history of both the home schooling movement in Kansas and the manifestation of home schooling parent support groups emphasizes the recognition that there is unalterable unity in intentions, directions, and goals between home schooling

parent support groups and the parents who are home schooling their children.

What follows is the result of data coalesced to describe the concerns and functions of home schooling parent support groups in Kansas as perceived by their leaders.

CHAPTER FOUR

PART TWO: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section is comprised of an analysis and interpretation of the interviews acquired from leaders from eleven home schooling parent support groups, an editor of a state-wide newsletter, and a speaker at a home schooling parent support group seminar held in Western Kansas. The intent is to give an account of the functions and concerns of home schooling parent support groups as described by their leaders.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The interviews employed were unstructured to prevent directing or influencing the material that emerged. Each interview for this naturalistic inquiry lasted approximately forty-five minutes.

Data collection and data analysis were performed concurrently, during which time the data were coded and sorted. The regularity of response content was analyzed for consistency, and the criterion used for delineating

and identifying the functions of home schooling parent support groups was the quantitative measure of frequency. The same method and criterion were employed when ascertaining the concerns of the home schooling parent support groups.

OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study involve five major concerns and the accompanying functions which have become manifest for fulfilling the demands of those interests. Seven further concerns emerged from the data collection and analysis. These concerns were not as frequently referenced as the five major concerns.

Home schooling parent support groups serve to function for home schooling parents in the following five major areas:

- Legal Concerns
- Support Concerns
- Group Activities
- Teacher Training, Curriculum, Testing, and Resources
- New Home Schooling Families

The seven other concerns expressed by leaders in the home schooling parent support groups include:

- Programs for Older Children
- Teaching Credentials
- Unrealistic Expectations
- Open Membership
- Adult Peer Pressure
- Public Education
- Relationships with Public Schools

The individual moral imperative to home educate children is a source of internal cohesiveness in the home schooling parent support groups in Kansas. Familial commitment to achieving shared objectives is a major unifying element.

Expressed in each interview with home schooling parent support group leaders was a clear and consistent compatibility of purpose. The stated aims which follow were indicated by the home schooling parent support group leaders during the interviews.

Shared Goals:

* We are just trying to be the organization that helps

people pull together. We don't really want to have an existence other than that.

* We have tried to be the self-help group for people who are wanting to home school their kids.

* We are motivated by love for our kids. We want to do what is best for them.

* I think it is just the goal of encouraging education. You know we believe in what we are doing--home schooling--educating our child at home.

* I became more interested in political things. Because you realize that home schooling is something that you fight for.

* We have the same things in our hearts. Something in common. Common ground. We are all working for a better education for our children.

* You know, one of the reasons we all home school is that we want to be involved with the lives of our children. We want to influence them. The years go quickly. Pretty soon they will be gone.

* Many parents have abdicated their responsibility. And they are suffering the results. I am ready now to take that upon myself. I will be my child's educator and all those other things. And I don't pretend that I am going to do it perfectly. Or that maybe the public school couldn't do a better job in some areas than I am doing. But I am looking at the overall scope. I am looking at character, morals, and education as well. I want a well-rounded child.

* A lot of the home schoolers I know are interested in character building because they have a faith in God. They want this to be transferred to their children.

* The statistics amply support the viability of home education as a good educational alternative and if nothing else, just the kids that come out of the home education movement generally are well-rounded kids, are good kids that you would want as examples and as ones that you want your kids to be around.

* This is something good. My kids are home because my

wife is a good teacher. My kids are home because I am a good teacher. My kids are home because no one knows them better than we do. My kids are home because we can do a great job of educating them in a much shorter time than the school can. And that gives us a whole lot of time to do other things. We have positive reasons why we want our kids at home. We are not reacting negatively against anything.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

A summary of the organizational characteristics of the home schooling parent support groups in Kansas appears on the matrix on page 116.

A synopsis of the matrix "Home Schooling Parent Support Groups in Kansas" indicates that home schooling parent support groups are located in all physiographic areas of Kansas.

The number of families in each group varies from five to five hundred. Cluster groups of four or five families form for educational and social endeavors, especially in the larger home schooling parent support groups.

Although the number of meetings per year varies, most meet monthly as a corporate group, and as often as twice a week in cluster groups.

Leadership is voluntary, though some groups have elected officers, and one home schooling parent support group has a paid coordinator.

Only one group has a constitution and by-laws; another has a statement of faith.

The philosophical orientation is predominantly Christian.

In Kansas, an upsurge of home schooling parent support groups began and continued to develop throughout the 1980's.

Through newsletters and telephone networking a close communication is maintained with the member families and with other groups throughout Kansas.

Few home schooling parent support groups in Kansas require formal membership to participate in their educational and social activities.

Home Schooling Parent Support Groups in Kansas

Site#	Location	# of Families	# of Meetings	Officers	Constitution By -laws	Philosophical Orientation	When Started	Newsletter Telephone list	Requirements of Members
#18	Southwestern Quarter - Rural	25 - 30 in Cluster groups of 4-5 families	Large - quarterly Cluster - weekly	Volunteer & Coordinator	none	Predominately Christian	1984	yes	none
#14	Mid-State - Urban College town	5	Weekly	Volunteer	none	Secular	1989	no	none
#15	Mid-State - Urban College town	25 - 30 in Cluster groups for field trips	Large -Monthly Cluster - varies	Volunteer	Statement of Faith	Christian	1985	yes 40 on mailing list	Statement of Faith
#2	Northeast College town Urban & rural	90	Children - monthly Field Trips - monthly Parents - monthly	Volunteer	none	Christian	1985	yes 90 on mailing list	none
#7	Northeast Urban	40 - 50	Varies	Elected Board & Paid Coordinator	yes	Christian	1983	yes 40 - 50 on mailing list	Goals, interview, Report # of hours
#10	Smokey Hills Central Kansas Rural	12 - 14	Monthly	Volunteer	none	Predominately Christian	1985	yes	none
# 4	Northwest Quarter - Sparsely pop.	45-50 in Cluster groups of 4 - 5 families	Large - monthly Cluster - varies	Volunteer & Coorinator	none	Predominately Christian	1983	yes	none
# 6	Southeast - Urban	400 - 500	On-going activities, sign - up	Volunteer & Elected	none	Non - Sectarian	1980 - 1981	yes 700 on mailing list.	none
# 9	South Central - 3 county area	45 in Cluster groups by age of kids	Large - monthly Cluster - 2 to 3 times weekly	Commitees - 1 volunteer from ea. community	none	Predominately Christian	1983	yes	none
#13	Southeast - Rural	15 - 17	Summer - bimonthly School Year - monthly	Volunteer	none	Predominately Christian	1990	yes	none
# 1	Northeast - Urban	200 in Cluster groups	Parents -monthly Ongoing events for children	Chairman & Volunteer	none	Non - Sectarian	1983	yes 200 on mailing list	none

DATA PRESENTATION

The functions and concerns of home schooling parent support groups in Kansas will be presented in five major functions and seven other concerns.

In presenting the findings of this naturalistic inquiry, each of the five major functions will be summarized in an overview. Following the overview, each sentence which indicates a finding will be separately quoted. The sentence will then be followed by data offered in evidence of the validity of the finding. The data offered in evidence will be direct statements extracted from interviews with home schooling parent support group leaders. Each statement will be designated with an asterisk (*).

The seven other concerns will be presented as a group. The overview of these concerns will be followed by evidence supporting the findings using the same format as outlined above.

FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO LEGAL CONCERNS

OVERVIEW OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO LEGAL CONCERNS

Through coordinated efforts, home schooling parent support groups function to provide legal information and legal alternatives concerning legislative changes and pressures. They have become an informed body through a networking of newsletters and interlocking state-wide phone trees whenever legislative action pertaining to home schooling is proposed.

The legal climate in Kansas is equivocal. Adaptation, speculation, persistence, experimentation, and improvisation are required of home schooling parents in their efforts to be in compliance with the law.

This condition has contributed to the continuing formation of support groups.

The home schooling parent support groups are seen as a partial solution to the prevailing legal dilemma by offering accountability, visibility, and public credibility to their members.

Personal support during times of legal confrontation is a benefit of membership in home schooling parent support groups.

The home schooling parent support group is a social entity capable of overseeing the home schooling movement. It has a comprehensive and well integrated appreciation of the inherent purpose of home education.

EVIDENCE OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO LEGAL CONCERNS

Finding of Legislative Interests:

"Through coordinated efforts, home schooling parent support groups function to provide legal information and legal alternatives toward legislative changes and pressures. They have become an informed body through a networking of newsletters and interlocking state-wide phone trees whenever legislative action pertaining to home schooling is proposed." (See matrix, pg. 116)

Evidence of Legislative Interests:

* Well, obviously, one function would be just simply legislative information, and coordinated efforts should that be necessary.

* If we don't attend to legislative matters, then we won't be able to function in any of those other areas. And that is a very dangerous thing because we are already under attack in a lot of quarters.

* Now, if we had a big legal crackdown on home schoolers, then I'm sure that the support group would be the hub around which we would all decide what we were going to do and how we were going to work with the other home school groups.

* Before I started working full time, yes, I was a

registered lobbyist. I went to Topeka and sat in on the education committee. My point is that I want to get this information--particularly the legislative information--out. I want them to contact legislators. With information, you need as many people to know as possible.

* I remember when we had a hearing in Topeka. I spoke up in several. The feedback from the education committee was that they couldn't believe the variety of people that were coming. They couldn't believe that home schoolers were actually intellectual people, educated people, doctors, lawyers, teachers, businessmen, farmers. What a wide spectrum of people! And the people were articulate.

* We tried to get a good home school bill. There was so much diversity of opinion, and so much independence, that they couldn't come to an agreement. I know that has hurt us in Kansas. It has kept us from getting a good bill.

* We have done this before with legislative meetings. In the summer before the session started, I would send out letters and say, "We are going to get together. Do you want to send a representative? Let's talk about what we want to do, if anything, in the legislature this year." It works pretty well for them to send representatives.

* We want them to act.

Finding of Legal Climate:

"The legal climate in Kansas is equivocal. Adaptation, speculation, persistence, experimentation, and improvisation are required of home schooling parents in their efforts to be in compliance with the law."

Evidence of Legal Climate:

* The public school system is not supportive of home education. We knew a family that got a call from the local school district and they said, "You put your kid in school or we are going to file truancy charges

against you and we don't care what you are doing."

* We had one family who even went so far as to follow most of the requirements of an accredited school. They actually flew a flag, and did all of the craziness that is associated with that. It was kind of funny at the time to think that those kinds of things would save them from prosecution were they determined to prosecute.

* Always, in the back of your mind, you can't ever say, "Look, I have done A, B, & C. They can't touch me."

* You know when we first started, I didn't know whether they were going to come haul me off to jail that first day or not. I knew I felt like we were legal, but, see, a lot of people don't feel like you are.

* The legality here in Kansas has been a big issue, a big topic to discuss.

* It just depends on the district attorney, and the judges, and what their viewpoint is, and how they want to interpret the law. And that is interpreted county by county, judge by judge, and it can change if the district attorney changes. They don't always handle it the same.

* One of the statutes requires that students be taught by a competent instructor, and the word "competent" is not defined anyplace. So that is open to interpretation, and who is going to decide what competent means? Because this particular family did not meet the arbitrary criterion of the local officials in terms of deciding what the word competent means, they were subject to prosecution.

* There is nothing in the law that requires a certain number of students, or that the teacher can't be related to the children, or anything like that.

* We have had courts go both ways on it, but essentially, because it has become more well-known and people all over the state are doing it now, in most cases it gets resolved.

* Right now they have a county attorney who is a home schooler, so they feel a little safer.

* I think they are still very cautious, but they are not to the point of "I don't want anybody to know where I am." Because we don't have that many people going to court.

Finding of Formation of Support Groups:

"This condition (the legal climate) has contributed to the continuing formation of support groups."

Evidence of Formation of Support Groups:

* I'm sure that there were families that were home educating before there was such a thing as a parent support group. And they were frequently intimidated by the local officials.

* At that point, at least in this state, the home education movement was kind of grass roots. It was pretty unorganized. There was one particular family in the eastern part of the state that was having difficulty with the state, with being taken to court and so on. Much of the support network, I think, started to form when that situation arose.

* The possibility of legal ramifications certainly directed the early development of the parent support group here in our town.

* One of the big questions was the legality of it. How in the world did we deal with the laws in this state? One of the things that we benefitted from was other support groups in other cities.

Finding of Benefits of Membership:

"The home schooling parent support groups are seen as a partial solution to the prevailing legal dilemma by offering accountability, visibility, and public credibility to their members.

Personal support during times of legal confrontation is a benefit of membership in home

schooling parent support groups."

Evidence of Benefits of Membership:

* I think it helps with legality. They keep records. We do our testing through them.

* There is an entire legal support system set up just for home educators. I mean with some heavy hitters involved with it, too. Constitutional lawyers and so on. And the fact is, in their own words, God has given them influence in the courts to be able to present the case for home education in a prudent and well organized manner. This has given home education credibility.

* A lawyer came and talked to us.

* We have had a lawyer come in and speak on the legal aspects.

* Three or four years ago, the Social Rehabilitation Services in ____ County went out to visit every home schooling family. That kept the telephones going. You know, what they did at our house, what you can be prepared for. That was something that came up where the support group was there.

* Six years ago, they had a court case in our district. They were members of our support group, and the courtroom was filled with all of us. All the home schoolers, as many as could, came. The family came out fine.

* We had one family that was having some legal trouble. Our group was there for information, and prayer, and support for that family.

Finding of Self-Regulation:

"The home schooling parent support group is a social entity capable of overseeing the home schooling movement. It has a comprehensive and well integrated appreciation of the inherent purpose of home education."

Evidence of Self-Regulation:

* Function number one is legal protection. That is crucial in our society today.

* If somebody is in a group, it is a safeguard for home schoolers.

* I spoke with one district attorney and she said, "I really don't know what to do with this family. They may be doing everything fine, but if I dismiss the case, I don't know what will happen. They may just go off and do nothing. What do you do?" And I explained that we had this program with some accountability, some resources, activities, and that sort of thing. She said, "Well, if they will do that, then we will dismiss the case. If they don't want to do that, it doesn't mean that the judge is going to find them to be truant, it just means that we are going to let the judge decide." It is a very subjective determination. That particular family decided to form with other families and form a similar organization to ours.

* I feel that self-regulation is the best. You are more familiar with the problems of home education, the needs. Otherwise, you are dealing with someone else who is in a completely different educational mode. What they know is the classroom, and then they evaluate you in a completely different environment.

FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO SUPPORT CONCERNS

OVERVIEW OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO SUPPORT CONCERNS

The sharing of home schooling experiences within the local support group functions as a contribution to encouragement and support for individual families in their home schooling endeavors.

The home schooling parent support group provides identity, diminishes estrangement, reinforces the sense of belonging, and offers an authenticity to the home schooling experience.

The sharing of experiences and mutual support among home schooling families encourages the freedom to reveal dilemmas, uncertainties, and discouragements, without discomfort. The recognition that these home schooling difficulties are common to other home schoolers who have achieved functional resolutions encourages individual home schooling families to persevere.

Child orientation and peer group involvement is a dominant concern for home schooling parent support groups. The persistence with which parents endeavor to educate the whole child is reflected in the continuing socialization with the activities and programs for the

home schooling children.

EVIDENCE OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO SUPPORT CONCERNS

Finding of Encouragement and Support:

"The sharing of home schooling experiences within the local support group functions as a contribution to encouragement and support for individual families in their home schooling endeavors."

Evidence of Encouragement and Support:

* Our focus right now is on supporting each other.
* I think the biggest thing the support group does is just that: support.
* This is what support groups do: They give you the practical, the support, the encouragement, just the exchange of ideas.
* To begin with, it was a matter of getting together to share ideas and lend emotional support.
* Primarily emotional support.
* Like I said, emotional support.
* I think an important function is to provide emotional support. The feeling of being alone, for a lot of us, being new home schoolers--most of us were very isolated in our own area. We needed someone to talk to and to share ideas with.
* Support, mainly. That is what the support group is for. To support each other emotionally. Support for

the parents and the kids.

Findings of Belongingness:

"The home schooling parent support group provides identity, diminishes estrangement, reinforces the sense of belonging, and offers an authenticity to the home schooling experience."

Evidence of Belongingness:

* I think first of all the support group provides a camaraderie for the couples involved and the children that are involved, too.

* I really think home school parent support groups are essential. They are a place where child, and mother, and father can go for encouragement. It is nice to know there is somebody out there besides you. That you are not a freak.

* I think the major benefit of a support group to me as a parent was getting rid of the isolation, but also the reassurance that you are not just alone. If you are the only person in the whole state--well, it is really hard to keep pushing on. It is a relief to be with other families who are doing it, also.

* I think in those early years it is very important just for the encouragement and to see that you are not alone.

* There is an encouragement in the loneliness. When I run into trouble, I can ask for some help. People don't want to feel like they are just out there hanging on a cliff all by themselves. There is an attitude that I am part of something that is bigger than me, that it is supportive of me. Something that I can relate to, that I can identify with, and that verifies and justifies that I am O.K.

* I was still new enough at this that it was helpful to me to just talk to some people who had been in it a

little bit longer than I had. To get some support and share ideas, and be assured, I guess, that I wasn't the only crazy one around. It is so nice and so helpful to know that there are other people with the same convictions, and that there are other people successfully doing the same thing.

* I am not the only strange person. In fact, if there is more than one of us, maybe we aren't so strange after all.

* We don't give them the magic formula that will make it work. We just offer them the support of knowing that there are lots of families who are doing it, and enjoy it, and persevere.

Finding of Shared Experience:

"The sharing of experiences and mutual support among home schooling families encourages the freedom to reveal dilemmas, uncertainties, and discouragements, without discomfort. The recognition that these home schooling difficulties are common to other home schoolers who have achieved functional resolutions encourages individual home schooling families to persevere."

Evidence of Shared Experience:

* I think it is important that people find out in the support group sharing sessions that everybody is struggling the way they are, and are having questions, and lack security, and everyone wonders if their kids are ever going to make it.

* I feel, as a teaching parent, I need the encouragement and suggestions that come from my peers, from other parents that are teaching, that have the same experiences that I do, that I don't feel like I am the only one with a problem, and I can go and share the good things.

* You aren't always looking for an answer or solution. Sometimes you just want someone to go, "Yeah, me,

too."

* Lots of times it is not some new revelation, but just experience and wisdom.

* It is encouraging when you can sit down, one-on-one, and say, "I have had a terrible week. I want to quit." And the good things, too, like, "Hey, my kid can read!"

* "Is it O.K. if my kid doesn't love home schooling like the books all say he will?" And they all don't. Just like a lot of kids don't like public school or private school. Well, a lot of kids just don't like school, period. I mean, you could hand it to them on a silver platter and they would say, "I don't want this. I don't like this."

* Education is a lot of work and being with people who are being subjected to the same pressures and burdens that you are being subjected to is helpful.

* Home schooling has always been good for us, but it has not always been a bed of roses.

* The biggest importance of the home school support group is that support that you get by knowing there are other people successfully doing it.

Finding of Socialization for the Child:

"Child orientation and peer group involvement is a dominant concern for home schooling support groups. The persistence with which parents endeavor to educate the whole child is reflected in the continuing socialization with the activities and programs of other home schooling children."

Evidence of Socialization for the Child:

* Another function that it served was a social function for our children.

* Some of the other support groups are really geared as more of an outlet for the children.

* Although I am not convinced that the students in the home school are bereft of the social interactions that they need, it is a fear and it is a shot, and a criticism that many have, so the support group gives a perceived benefit, where I have a place for social development for my child. I personally think that is a straw man, but nonetheless, it is one of the benefits of the support group for a family that fears that.

* Our children enjoy getting together with other children. A lot of people think that when you home school you are taking them away from society, and they are not going to be able to socially adapt. Home school support groups are a time when they can get together with other kids, and they can talk about their mom and dad just like we talk about our children, and can associate with their fears.

* We have things regularly where the home school kids can get together and socialize. Different kinds of parties and picnics and skates and things like that. But they are involved in a lot of community activities. They go to ball games and things like that, just the same as any other kids.

* The main reason she would come to the support groups was to find friends for her children. Because in that context, they could find friends who were also home schoolers.

* Socialization for the kids. Even if you have been in it six or seven years, it is still nice to meet these other people, and feel like there are other people doing it.

* I think it is good for your kids. You know, a lot of people are involved in church and 4-H, but it is good to see other kids that are home schooled. You know, older ones, as well as the younger ones. I think it is good for them.

* My children look forward to being with their home school friends.

* I know that there are a lot of home schoolers who are friends of home schoolers. They tend to do a lot of things together. They hit it off very well.

* We like to have a chance for the kids to just visit and play and have fun.

* The whole social dynamic of home schooling took on a real major impact in our particular group. We were trying to figure out how to go on picnics, and we were trying to figure out how to start a Boy Scout troop, and how to figure out all these things to counter balance the supposed neglect of the social development of our children.

* I think it produces friendship between families, and it helps the children to know there are other children who are home schooling.

* The children can see that there are other kids home schooling. That they are normal people. They are not weird or far out or fanatics or anything, but normal, well educated, decent people. And they are doing home schooling, too. I think that it is really important for the kids as well as the parents.

FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO GROUP ACTIVITIES

OVERVIEW OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO GROUP ACTIVITIES

A major function of the home schooling parent support groups is to provide educational group activities for the students.

There is a general pedagogical bias which tends toward concrete learning experiences, group activity, hands-on learning, and an action orientation.

A collaboration exists among teaching parents which encourages them to display leadership in educational innovations, creativity, and individual entrepreneurship.

The flexibility of the home schooling parent support group's organizational structure facilitates continual emergence of new educational programs and social events.

An extensive spectrum of activities including guest speakers, graduation exercises, grade promotions, holiday programs, field trips, family fun nights, group projects, group teaching units, and school traditions are arranged for home schooling students.

EVIDENCE OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO GROUP ACTIVITIES

Finding of Group Learning:

"A major function of the home schooling parent support groups is to provide educational group activities for the students."

Evidence of Group Learning:

* Because the parents are supported, then it allows those kinds of functions for the kids. The science fairs, the projects, I know here we even perform. People play or sing, or rap or dance.

* To provide interesting educational field trips for our children. It is more for them, to provide activities for them to do.

* We try to get educational things, and we try to get in some fun things.

* It is a grass roots kind of thing. It pulls out of needs rather than out of, "Well, we have to do something this week. We better put something on the calendar." Nobody has that kind of time to waste.

* For activities, I think home schoolers plug into things that are already existing in the city.

* Just one family would not do that, but in a group, it is possible.

Finding of Teacher Collaboration and Hands-On Learning:

"There is a general pedagogical bias which tends toward concrete learning experiences, group activity, hands-on learning, and an action orientation.

A collaboration exists among teaching parents which encourages them to display leadership in educational innovations, creativity, and individual entrepreneurship."

Evidence of Teacher Collaboration and Hands-On Learning:

* A particular person has a particular interest and says, "I really like Kansas History. I would love to see us do a Kansas History Fair." And so that person generally ends up being the head.

* If somebody has a particular talent, then that is what they teach.

* This past year we had a President's day. The kids each researched a president at home, wrote one page, and then sent that ahead. The people in charge of that day printed them all off so everybody had a page of the presidents. Then we did time lines that day. We did murals. All sorts of things that had to do with the presidents. It was one of our education things this year.

* One family brought a cow's eye to show. The kids enjoyed that.

* We got together about every three weeks. If we were studying Indians, we got together to make teepees, to make beads, all those things that were easier to do as a group. The kids dressed up like Indians. We had a good time.

* We got together and baked yeast bread.

* One mother did a unit on aerospace. She got a lot of things from NASA. The kids made paper airplanes and they had a flight contest.

* There is a woman who is an art major. She goes ahead and gets copies of things the teachers would get and

gives a special lesson to lots of people. Then she takes you through the art museum.

* One time we did models of the solar system.

* One of the fathers is an entomologist. He brought them up to the university to show them insects. One of the parents works at _____ Press so we got to see all these presses working.

* Friday Class is a class that is once a month. We take the morning and each mother is responsible to take a class one time in the year. We sign up for a certain date. There are three different sessions each day for different age groups. It is up to the parents to decide what they want to do.

* A year ago we had a big international day. People from other countries, the foreign exchange students came in. We had a unit on Mexico. We had three pinatas so the kids could all take a chance with that. Then we did one on the Polynesian Islands, so we had leis and some shells that they painted. And food that they tasted. Then we had one on the Chinese, too. We had some expenses there for brushes for Chinese writing, and rice and fortune cookies, and that type of thing.

* One woman who was a biology teacher gave a biology class. We dissected pig hearts. The kids really got into that.

Finding of Education Variety:

"The flexibility of the home schooling parent support group's organizational structure facilitates continual emergence of new educational programs and social events.

An extensive spectrum of activities including guest speakers, graduation exercises, grade promotions, holiday programs, field trips, family fun nights, group projects, group teaching units, and school traditions are arranged for home schooling students."

Evidence of Educational Variety:

* They have had other people come in who are not home schooling, but they are willing to teach a class in their business or whatever they know how to do.

* The kids made birdhouses and a lady from the Audubon Society came to speak.

* A music teacher came in to show the kids the different musical instruments and then gave them the opportunity to play one.

* One time a policeman came in to give a presentation like in a regular school.

* We do have graduation exercises from high school. The families plan them themselves, but the support group really shows up for them.

* Christmas programs are fun. Something you can invite grandparents to.

* Usually we invite grandparents in and anyone who is interested in home schooling for the next year. It is a good time for them to come, because they can meet with people and see some of the things that people have been working on.

Events Cited

Group Field Trips:

Tours of various companies
Hospitals
Liberal Air Museum
Pizza Hut
Zoos
Fossil hunting camp out at Scott Lake camp ground
Fort Larned
Konza Prairie hike

Sheep Farm
Fire Departments
Smoky River
First Historical Capital of Kansas
Hutchinson Cosmosphere
The Capital Building at Topeka
Hallmark's Kalidascope
Forbes Air Force Base
Kansas Museum of History

Parents Only:

Progressive Pot Luck Dinner
Father's Night
Orientation Sessions before the school year starts
Curriculum Nights

Family Fun Nights:

Skating Parties
Bowling
Picnics
Swimming at the YMCA
Cookouts
Birthday Celebration for all the students who have had a birthday that month.
Hayrack ride

Group Projects:

Play productions
Attend Theater for Young Americans
Boy Scout & Girl Scout troops of home schoolers
Track and Field Day
Baseball, gymnastics or soccer teams of home schoolers
Science fairs
Fine arts festivals
Craft days
Book It

Group Teaching Units:

Indian Unit at Thanksgiving
Units developed from traveling trunks sent by Kansas Museum of Natural History
Salt Clay relief of United States as a group project
Unit on Veterinary Medicine

School Traditions:

Activity scrapbooks for the home schooling parent support group
School pictures
Yearbooks
Grade promotion night

* There are lots of things that we would like to do that we are not doing. Either simply because they represent formidable organizational challenges, or we don't have the money.

FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO TEACHER TRAINING, CURRICULUM, TESTING, AND RESOURCES

OVERVIEW OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO TEACHER TRAINING, CURRICULUM, TESTING, AND RESOURCES

Home schooling parent support groups maintain an instructional environment equipped with pedagogical information. This promotes teaching methodologies that have pragmatic application to home schooling.

Traditional education concepts are springboards for creative innovation and contributions to the home schooling tutorial method. The bias is toward application, experimentation, and collaboration.

The purchasing of home school material represents a major investment for most home schooling families. A function of the home schooling parent support group is to provide information on the variety of published curriculums, arrange curriculum fairs, and extend opportunities to counsel with home schooling families who have used a particular curriculum.

An adjunct to the home schooling parent support group's function is to offer a service of standardized testing to evaluate the progress of the student.

Many support groups exchange educational resources

and curriculum materials. Some have formalized this procedure into lending libraries for tapes, magazines, videos, cassette recordings, books, and other educational effects.

EVIDENCE OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO TEACHER TRAINING, CURRICULUM, TESTING, AND RESOURCES

Finding of Teacher Training:

"Home schooling parent support groups maintain an instructional environment equipped with pedagogical information. This promotes a suffusion of ideas that have pragmatic application to home schooling."

Evidence of Teacher Training:

* It is to teach the parents or help them do their job of teaching.
* Function number two is the training and equipping and preparing the teachers. Train the parents to be better teachers.
* We usually have one meeting to educate the parents how to improve their teaching skills.
* Sometimes we have a speaker come and give a talk on a particular aspect of home education. A couple of elementary school teachers came and spoke to us about how to assess reading abilities and how to do things

that were more related to the actual carrying out of the education process.

* We bring teachers in to speak on teaching art, teaching science, new ideas, new ways of doing things.

* I wanted to come in and put a more academic edge to my support group. I wanted to come in and give a more teaching training edge to my support group. I wanted my personality and my hot buttons to have an impact on my support group, as much as the artsy folks have an impact, as much as the field trip folks have an impact, and as much as the social people have an impact.

* One time we had a librarian come in to tell about reading programs. Of course, most of the kids know how to use the library, but she told how to pick out books, what to look for, and what are you looking for with your child.

* We had an art teacher from one of the Christian schools come in and tell what books to use and how to get started.

* Sometimes we will have a panel of experienced home schoolers talk on how do you set up a schedule. How to keep records, or how you can do all this and have a home life and a school and still keep everything running.

Finding of Teacher Collaboration:

"Traditional education concepts are springboards for creative innovation and contributions to home schooling methodology. The bias is toward application, experimentation, and collaboration."

Evidence of Teacher Collaboration:

* She asked me about math, especially for the younger children. I encouraged her to use a lot of hands on things. Instead of doing page after page in the workbook, take some beans, or some stones, or some

little cars....

* You need the support groups and the everyday people to say, "Tell me how to do this step by step." Because the theory is all these big wonderful philosophical goals, but you also need the practical everyday steps.

* There are many different experts available in the different parents involved. We have a professor of plant pathology who is involved, a professor of human ecology, a construction firm owner is involved. We have a large variety of others. If I'm having trouble, or if my family is having trouble with accomplishing science class, we can get with somebody whose interest and abilities lie in that area and work through things. Same thing with any subject. I guess that's related to the support base.

* We have a couple of moms that are going to hire instructors in foreign language for four or five families. We want to do the same thing for higher math, lab science, foreign language, things like that. Things that really require a special expertise.

Finding of Curriculum Information:

"The purchasing of home school material represents a major investment for most home schooling families. A function of the home schooling parent support group is to provide information on the variety of published curriculums, arrange curriculum fairs, and extend opportunities to counsel with home schooling families who have used a particular curriculum."

Evidence of Curriculum Information:

* It functions as an information dispensing organization from the standpoint of curriculum materials and testing services and how to get started doing it, how to keep going, what do you do when you feel like you're not getting anywhere or the kids aren't getting anywhere.

* One of the important functions is the educational

function. We plan activities like a curriculum fair where you would have all kinds of curriculum materials out for people to see.

* When we first started home schooling five years ago a fellow shared with us Moore's philosophy. At that time, we were aware of that and ACE and maybe a couple of other curriculums. But now you have a hundred different kinds of things that you can choose from. We get ideas from each other, the other people that had used them, and what they think or believe about that material.

* ...learning about curriculum, learning how you teach math, learning about what to do when you have toddlers running around and are trying to school. We are really very oriented toward immediacy.

Finding of Testing:

"An adjunct to the home schooling parent support group's function is to offer a service of standardized testing to evaluate the progress of the student."

Evidence of Testing:

* We provide testing. We hold an Iowa Basic Testing every year for parents who want to go that route, to keep track of where they are compared to the public schools.

* They test as a group, with some one person administering the test. They are divided into age groups, different classrooms, and the parents help, but they don't test their own children.

* When we get our tests back, a lady is going to talk about how to read these test results. Like, when it says he is grade 12, does that really mean that he is doing 12th grade work? You know, to help interpret.

Finding of Shared Resources:

"Many support groups exchange educational resources and curriculum materials. Some have formalized this procedure into lending libraries for tapes, magazines, videos, cassette recordings, books, and other educational effects."

Evidence of Shared Resources:

* There are a lot of resources that one individual can't get by himself, but collectively you can get a lot of stuff.

* Resources is one thing. You say, "Here is what I have. You can look at it. You can thumb through it. It works for me in this way."

* Sharing resources. That is kind of my function. Not that I set out to do it, but because I have been in it the longest, and also, I bought too many things at the beginning.

* Support groups do that, too. Exchange materials and curriculum.

* Sharing materials and things like that, oh sure. I think that comes out just normally any time we get together.

* That was brought up in our last support group meeting. Should we get a library going? What about all the books that we have? How can we make them available to everyone else?

* I have a set of Music of the Masters, a hundred dollars' worth of tapes of composers and their music. I would like to see some system made so we could simply let those be shared without losing the investment that we put into them.

* Our group has a resource library. They loan out books and tapes. We send off and get Dr. Moore's tapes, or Gregg Harris tapes, and tapes from the state seminars in other states. Some are not about home schooling, but attached to it, like discipline, or being good parents. Other subjects might be how to teach history,

socialization, how to motivate children. We have a book library and the major home school magazines.

FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO NEW HOME SCHOOLING FAMILIES

OVERVIEW OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO NEW HOME SCHOOLING FAMILIES

Among the membership of home schooling parent support groups are experienced home schoolers who have formulated versatile methods for communicating with and assisting people who are potential home schoolers.

Upon initial contact from an interested family, individual members of the particular home schooling parent support group provide general information pertaining to legalities, curriculum possibilities, and the availability of support group functions.

New home schooling families are introduced to the variety of existing curriculums and are invited to seminars to examine publishers' displays and become apprised of the experiences of other home schooling families who have used such curriculums. They are assisted and counseled on how to select a functional curriculum suitable to their individual educational needs.

In the initial stages of home schooling, dramatic progress in academic growth is often not apparent and discouragement infiltrates the learning experience.

This discouragement is diminished as new entrants into the home schooling movement gain encouragement and support from members of the home schooling parent support group.

A significant contribution to the initiate home schooler is the mentoring assistance offered by the more experienced home schoolers. The collective experience of these veteran home schoolers covers a wide and varied range of academic expertise.

EVIDENCE OF FINDING

FUNCTIONS RELATING TO NEW HOME SCHOOLING FAMILIES

Finding of First Contact:

"Upon initial contact from an interested family, individual members of the particular home schooling parent support group provide general information pertaining to legalities, curriculum possibilities, and the availability of support group functions."

Evidence of First Contact:

* An important purpose of a support group is to lend its experience, especially to newly joining members so that they can efficiently choose a curriculum and efficiently sight on a record keeping system, and know

what the legalities are so that they can be as fully in compliance with the law as possible.

* And so what they do is call and say, "Now, I am interested in home schooling. What do I do?" And I say, "Let me send you this stuff. You read it over and when you finish, call me with your concrete questions."

* There are new ones coming in all the time. Every year when we update the list, we have new families.

* Yes, I get a lot of phone calls from people...

* We send them a new member packet. It has a current meeting notice listing field trips or learning activities that are going on in the group, a legal sheet about Kansas law, a resource pamphlet with major publishers and curriculum people, and just basic general information like a pamphlet called "Twenty most asked questions about home schooling." It saves a lot of time.

* If I hear of someone, I always invite them into my home and show them what we are doing. I tell them the things that are possible with the support group, the activities that are possible for their children to participate in. Because it is hard to just start.

* Mostly it is friends. You just have friends. You help a new person and you get to know them.

* In our group they have asked, "Who is willing to take phone calls from first-timers?" That is another thing that we do, answering their questions or being a sounding board for them.

* That was really a major factor in us beginning home schooling...talking to someone else who was already doing it.

Finding of Curriculum Information:

"New home schooling families are introduced to the variety of existing curriculums and are invited to

seminars to examine publishers' displays and become apprised of the experiences of other home schooling families who have used such curriculums. They are assisted and counseled on how to select a functional curriculum suitable to their individual educational needs."

Evidence of Curriculum Information:

* One of the functions is helping new people who need to know about curriculum, helping new families for the first year or so.

* Usually, you try to get them to go to seminars so that they can see the various curriculums.

* We tell them what a curriculum is like and what the program is like from other parents who have used it. That is a real plus, especially for those who are just starting in the home school circle.

* You show them what kind of curriculum you use.

* We lent her some material and things like that, just curriculum to use. And I had loaned her a lot of books to read, Dr. Moore's books.

* I ask, "What are your interests, what do you want, what do you need?" It is confusing when you see that vast array of curriculum. I mean, how do you decide?

Finding of Support:

"In the initial stages of home schooling, dramatic progress in academic growth is often not apparent and discouragement infiltrates the learning experience. This discouragement is diminished as new entrants into the home schooling movement gain encouragement and support from members of the home schooling parent support group."

Evidence of Support:

* I think that when you are starting home schooling you have so many days that just don't go well. You never get past that first level of learning. And you are saying, "This is just not working." But, if you talk to other parents, and they can say, "Well, everyone has days like this. Children have days like that in the public school, and if you were teaching in the public school, you would have days like that." And you find out that it is not uncommon, you know, the feelings that you have and the inadequacies that you feel.

* The more experienced ones have more to share with the ones who are beginning home schooling. They have already gone through the difficult process of wading through curriculum materials and teaching methods and how to keep records and things like that.

* I think that there is such a lack of confidence in the beginning. In many cases, when you start home schooling, you are the only one in your family, you are the only one in your church, or your neighborhood, and maybe you are getting opposition from family members or neighborhood people. Or you just feel insecure. You desperately need that encouragement that you can give one another.

* It is similar to new parenting, you know, when you have never been a parent before. It is nice to have someone say, "Yeah, my kid cried like that, too. It wasn't because I was doing anything, they just do that." And then you go, "Whew!"

Finding of Mentoring:

"A significant contribution to the initiate home schooler is the mentoring assistance offered by the more experienced home schoolers. The collective experience of these veteran home schoolers covers a wide and varied range of academic expertise."

Evidence of Mentoring:

* We assign all the new families an experienced family to kind of bounce things off of, and to ask questions of.

* We try to encourage them and to be mentors. We say, you know, "You can call us any time."

* They ask:
  - What do you say to people who are giving you a hard time?
  - How do we answer the local school people: teachers, principals, superintendents?
  - How can I do this and still function in any other areas of my life?
  - Are my kids going to be socially backwards?
  - How do you get time to be alone?
  - What kind of curriculum do you use?
  - How do you handle younger children while you are home schooling?
  - How do you get all your housework done?

* Usually the new moms lean on the ones who have been in there longer to organize and set up.

* Here is this little gal. She has four little ones. Her husband is not supportive. Her house is a wreck. She doesn't have the skills. But she has such a great desire to develop them, to train her children, and she knows God wants her to home school. How is she going to manage? How is she going to survive? So she and I are working on it together on a weekly basis now since February, for me to help her grow a little faster than I was able to grow.

FINDING

SEVEN OTHER CONCERNS

OVERVIEW OF FINDING

SEVEN OTHER CONCERNS

Five major concerns and functions were present in the data: functions relating to legal concerns, functions relating to support concerns, functions relating to group activities, functions relating to teacher training, curriculum, testing, and resources, and functions relating to new home schooling families. Present in the data collection and analysis are seven further concerns that affect the home schooling movement. They are not as frequently referenced as are the five major concerns. They differ in type in that no function has been fully developed by home schooling parent support groups in response to these seven emerging concerns.

Home schooling parent support group leaders expressed an imperative to implement academic programs developed to meet the evolving educational needs of children as they reach high school age.

The equating of teacher credentialing with teacher competency is an anxiety expressed by many home

schooling parent support group leaders.

They cautioned parents to be wary of unrealistic expectations relating to the outcomes of home schooling.

It was important to establish that no philosophical, religious, or ethnic persuasion be a hindrance to any family desiring to join the home schooling ranks.

Adult peer pressure manifesting through family and community members objecting to or deriding home schoolers has been an uncomfortable current in the home schooling movement.

There was a general feeling of disquietude concerning the effects of public school education.

Members of home schooling parent support groups were engaged in achieving positive relationships with many local public school systems.

EVIDENCE OF FINDING

SEVEN OTHER CONCERNS

Finding of Concern for Older Children:

"Home schooling parent support group leaders expressed an imperative to implement academic programs developed to meet the evolving educational needs of children as they reach high school age."

Evidence of Concern for Older Children:

* The biggest problem we face right now is that our children are growing. When we first got into this, there was virtually no one with children older than twelve. And not very many of those. Now, some eight years later, that is changing very rapidly, and although there are lots of new folks coming in with young children, the ones that have been here awhile, their kids are growing up, and they are starting to face the concerns of, "Gee, how am I going to teach my kid trigonometry, and what am I going to do about lab science?" Some of the more adventurous have managed to arrange these things on their own.

* It is difficult to gear all of these things to all of the ages, because we are talking about kindergarten through junior high school.

* The color and complexion of the group has changed, especially as the children get older.

* The problem exists, then, of how to do these things geared for older children. We are working toward organizing classes for them on a larger group basis that would involve several families.

* Parents teach a class, or they have a professional in a certain field like chemistry or accounting. The classes are for teenagers.

* I am in the older group because my kids are older. They have gone to all the community things. We have done field trips two or three times in our area. So we are gearing our field trips and our activities to older children.

* As your kids get older, people ask, "How long are you going to do this?" And I am not always sure what to say. As long as it is working well.

* Most of the families in our small group have small children and my children are teenagers. So they feel like they need more on their age.

* We hope to provide apprenticeship opportunities in the future as kids get older.

Finding of Concern about Teaching Credentials:

"The equating of teacher credentialing with teacher competency is an anxiety expressed by many home schooling parent support group leaders."

Evidence of Concern about Teaching Credentials:

* I am concerned about people unqualified to teach. Please do not equate that with qualified by a state credential or standard. There are some parents that are simply not going to make good home school teachers. I think they could be if they were willing, but a lot of them are not willing. So, for those parents, home schooling is probably not a good idea. There are a lot of them that are just flakey, undisciplined people. They would be doing their children a disservice.

* I had taught school before, so I had the confidence. I had to relearn a lot of things. Because it really is different. You just don't teach the same.

* The educational establishment, they always say that we need to have certified teachers and to be taught in an accredited school to make it in the world. That is their basic argument. They don't have any

substantiation for that. They just say it over and over.

* The most gifted teacher I know has a high school education. She is a natural teacher.

* I am certified. Only because my husband said I had to be because he didn't want anything to happen legally. But that didn't help me one iota to home school. Not one little bit. And if I ever go to hearings on the state level, that is what I am going to say. Certification did not make me a good teacher.

* Do you have to distinguish between now I am a parent and now I am a teacher? Or do the roles just overlap and you fulfill whatever role is appropriate for that time?

* I think that there is among the teaching profession a very cynical hubris that teaching is a profession, in the sense that it is a highly specialized body of knowledge requiring a great many hours of dedicated study to learn. And that it is not something that the layman can possibly master. And that allowing the great unwashed of home schooling to teach their own children deprives these children of the chance of learning something really significant.

Finding of Concern about Unrealistic Expectations:

"They cautioned parents to be wary of unrealistic expectations relating to the outcomes of home schooling."

Evidence of Concern about Unrealistic Expectations:

* I think there are people who just want their children to be such shining examples, either for friends or relatives. Little Susy has to be at least a year ahead of where she, chronologically, should be. And you think, "Can't you just give the kid a break, here?"

* One of the things home schoolers, particularly new ones, have to learn and watch out for is that they just try to overdo. They want their child to be able to take the G.E.D. (General Education Diploma) when they are twelve.

* It is dangerous, too, to compare with other families. I was really in slavery to that for years. I got to the point where I could not read another book about home schooling, I could not talk to another home school family, because I had to just pull myself back and say, "I have to center in on my family. With my abilities, and my weaknesses, and do the best I can here, until I get enough confidence that I can start talking to other people."

* Some people think, you know, that if you have been in it a long time, that your kids always behave perfectly, and always want to do everything that you have for them to do, and always love every subject. And that is not true. It is just a lot like other school kids. They don't always like school, and they don't always want to do what you have for them to do, and it is not always a fun, wonderful thing.

Finding of Concern about Open Membership:

"It was important to establish that no philosophical, religious, or ethnic persuasion be a hindrance to any family desiring to join the home schooling ranks."

Evidence of Concern about Open Membership:

* We don't want to be exclusive.

* Some of the home educator support groups do not feel, or deliberately have not made their religious convictions a part of their group. Their function would be to support home education as a mode of education.

* It was stressed when we first started that we would keep our religious views out. That it is just a home

schooling support group. It is not to try to bring your own personal Christian beliefs into something else.

* We have members who are not Christian. It has purposely been that way. Now, if we got into bylaws and being real official---We have had one or two who would not join because we would not say we were a Christian group.

* We are very careful to welcome visitors and say, "We want you to be here."

* We have been accused of being separatists, that we were elitists. But that is no longer the case considering the breadth of humanity that shows up here. We have every stripe of strange type come here, as well as professionals. We have all kinds here. So that particular label no longer holds sway.

* We don't proselytize or anything, but we do speak of our faith openly, so I think that the person or family who was not Christian would not feel too comfortable.

Finding of Concern about Adult Peer Pressure:

"Adult peer pressure manifesting through family and community members objecting to or deriding home schoolers has been an uncomfortable current in the home schooling movement."

Evidence of Concern about Adult Peer Pressure:

* One thing is adult peer pressure saying, "You guys are crazy. What are you doing?" You know, my friends, my family, they all think we are crazy.

* It is real easy to meet the educational requirements. The big problem is the condemnation from other families.

* If you keep your child out of public school many people, both of the right and the left, are very offended.

* If I get flack from somebody like family members or friends, my support group members are my friends, as far as the home schooling is concerned.

* You get it from your parents and your friends: that this is a crazy idea.

Finding of Concern about Public Education:

"There was a general feeling of disquietude concerning the effects of public school education."

Evidence of Concern about Public Education:

* Children grow up believing that there is a single answer. And a right answer. That the things that they read and they hear are true. They sit in classes and simply look to you, the authority figure, to give the right answer. They will not willingly evaluate what they read or what they hear, or what their fellow students say. Because they are used to a method of thinking that is acquiescent, without evaluation of any kind. I have tried to raise my children to be people who think for themselves, and who question. Believing what you are told is not what a good citizen does in any country. Democracy is based on education. And the questioning that we do toward our rulers.

* (College professor) I began to be alerted that there was a problem even before my children were born. I spent two years dealing with these college students, trying to figure out how in the world they ever got a diploma, and how the heck they ever got into college. I knew that was not an alternative I was going to entertain for educational reasons. It would seem to me that it is fairly beyond dispute that children are less well off educationally, at least, if not emotionally, psychologically, and physically, in a public school. That doesn't seem to be seriously argued by anyone. With the possible exception of the public school establishment.

* It is almost as though the school replaces the family as the primary educational institution. The whole

life revolves around school.

* I said, "This is my son, and I am really concerned about him. And I don't want you guys coming back to me and saying in five or ten years, when he gets ready to graduate from high school, 'Well, we will just give him a diploma even though he can't read.'" That happened to my brother.

Finding of Positive Relationships with Public Schools:

"Members of home schooling parent support groups were engaged in achieving positive relationships with many local public school systems."

Evidence of Positive Relationships with Public Schools:

* Our support group was contacted to speak at the college. Three couples went. We were all scared to death. It was mostly school administrators. The other two couples had taken their kids out of public school, and they wanted to know why. I think that they felt a little defensive. But mostly they were just interested in how to do it, and wanted to see our materials and the publishers. We had a favorable response. They were real nice.

* There are a lot of individuals in the public school system who are sympathetic to the home schooling movement because they are educators first. They believe in teaching. They delight in the imparting of knowledge to children. And when they see a system that works, they are enthusiastic about it.

* My son has a learning disability. And one of the public school teachers, believe it or not, said, "What he needs is one-on-one for awhile." And I said, "How do you get one-on-one? Are you talking about home schooling?" And she said, "Yeah, off record, that is kind of what I am talking about. If you can't get it in the public school, you are going to have to get it through a tutor, or do it yourself." And that is kind of what started us thinking about it.

* In Western Kansas we haven't had any trouble from our public schools. They have been fairly supportive, and I really appreciate the public schools in that way. Because they have been helpful to us and to our family.

* We believe in what we are doing. We really tried to stress that we were not bashing public schools, but it simply was not working for that particular child.

* A friend and I went to the public school last Friday. We talked with the man who has dealings with home schoolers. We just wanted to have a channel that we could work through if he had questions, or we had questions, so that there wouldn't be any conflicts that would arise that would get too big. The public school doesn't really know quite what to do with us, and yet they don't want to hurt home schoolers. So one thing that we went to tell him was, "If there is a home schooler that you are concerned about, that is all by themselves, let them know about us, first."

* Several families have had questions, and the superintendent has said, "Well, maybe what you should do is contact the home school people." So they know we are out there.

* The public school authorities are trying to be everything to kids today. They are trying to be counselors; they are trying to be educators; they are trying to do so much and are stretched so thin. I would hope that the public school authorities would realize that we don't really want to be in competition with them. We don't really want to be adversaries. But we are willing to pick up and take the responsibility for our children. I would like to see the public and the home schools declare a truce and that they would let us carry on. We could learn from one another.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter of summary, findings, and recommendations regarding the home schooling parent support groups in Kansas is divided into three sections. The first section summarizes the study, the second section discusses the findings, and the final section proposes recommendations to researchers and educational theorists, home schooling parents, home schooling parent support group leaders, public school authorities, administrators who conduct teacher training programs at universities and colleges, and the personnel of state education agencies.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this inquiry was to investigate the local autonomous home schooling parent support groups in Kansas with the focus directed toward acquiring a more dimensional understanding of the mutual objectives to reach excellence in education by both the public

education authorities and the home schooling parents.

The study was a naturalistic inquiry into the concerns and functions of home schooling parent support groups in Kansas as revealed by the home schooling parent support group leaders.

The population for the study was the membership of twenty-six local autonomous home schooling parent support groups in Kansas. A sample was chosen using the maximum variation sampling technique. The interviews employed were unstructured to prevent directing or influencing the material that emerged.

Two activities were involved in data analysis: unitizing and categorizing. In order to establish the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation of information was provided through interviews, observation, and document analysis. Standard methods were employed to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

This research offers an overall description of the home schooling parent support groups in Kansas through the concerns and functions communicated by their leaders.

FINDINGS

The home schooling movement in Kansas is an alternative educational entity whose membership has, since 1980, increased with unusual generativity. Accompanying support groups have also increased in number throughout the state.

The findings of this study involve five major concerns and the accompanying functions which affect the home schooling parent support group movement. Further findings uncovered seven other associative concerns that were also of interest and influence to the home schooling parent support groups.

Functions Relating to Legal Concerns:

Home schooling parent support groups function to provide legislative and legal information concerning legislative changes and alternatives. These groups offer accountability, visibility, and public credibility to their presence in the education sector. Home schooling parent support groups form a network of autonomous structures which demonstrate evidence of self-regulation.

Functions Relating to Support Concerns:

The home schooling parent support groups function to provide identity, diminish estrangement, reinforce the sense of belonging for parents and children, and offer an authenticity to the home schooling experience. The recognition of these attributes in the home schooling community encourages individual home schooling families to persevere when under social or legal pressure. The persistence with which parents endeavor to educate the whole child, the sharing of experiences, and mutual support among home schooling families are strong bonding elements.

Functions Regarding Group Activities:

Home schooling parent support groups function to provide educational group activities and to create programs that stimulate a continuing interest in the home schooling process. Collaboration among teaching parents, flexible organizational structure, and a pedagogical bias toward concrete learning experiences combine to furnish an extensive spectrum of educational activities for home schooling children. Group activities have a focus toward hands-on learning and

action orientation.

Functions Regarding Teacher Training, Curriculum, Testing, and Resources:

Home schooling parent support groups function to provide information on teaching methodologies that have a pragmatic application to home schooling procedures. The home schooling parent support group apprises member families concerning the variety of published curriculums and texts, arranges curriculum fairs and seminars, and provides counsel through home schooling families who have used a particular curriculum. An adjunct service to the home schooling parent is standardized testing administered by another parent to evaluate the progress of the student. Many support groups exchange educational resources, curriculum materials, and other educational effects.

Functions Regarding New Home Schooling Families:

Home schooling parent support groups function to provide information to new home schooling families concerning legalities, curriculum possibilities, and the availability of support group functions. A significant

contribution to the initiate home schooler is the mentoring assistance offered by the more experienced home schoolers.

Seven Other Concerns:

Seven other concerns were voiced by the home schooling parent support group leaders:

- Programs for Older Children
- Teaching Credentials
- Unrealistic Expectations
- Open Membership
- Adult Peer Pressure
- Public Education
- Relationships with Public Schools

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study indicate that additional examination and investigation is warranted. There are many academic resources and social characteristics present within the framework of home schooling parent

support groups that are as yet undocumented. This material will contribute to a mutual understanding and greater public compatibility among educators who are striving for excellence in education. The manifestation of these potentials will be of interest to home schooling parents, home schooling parent support group leaders, public school authorities, administrators who conduct teacher training programs at the university and college levels, and the state education agencies.

Researchers and Educational Theorists:

There is an insufficiency of professional literature regarding the home schooling parent support groups. Further studies which describe, analyze, and interpret the home schooling parent support groups at the local, state, and national levels are needed to achieve greater objectivity in determining the efficacy and authenticity of the home schooling experience.

The direction of research could be focused upon the many functions that the home schooling parent support groups provide, the aims and purposes which unify this confederation of entities, the benefits of membership, and the organizational structure that sponsors the

potential for self-regulation.

Contemporary educational studies into tutorial techniques as employed by home schooling teachers remains a virtually unexplored realm of research and findings. Further investigation into these techniques should be conducted to either demythologize or substantiate the alleged effectiveness and practicality of these methods.

An analysis of the teaching methods and attitudes which contribute to the marked progress of the home schooling students should be assayed for the purpose of documentation and evaluation.

Studies of the contributions of parental involvement in public school programs should be incorporated into the findings concerning home schooling parent support groups to appraise the correlation existing between parental involvement and student achievement.

Home Schooling Parents:

As home schooling parent support groups broaden their functions and services, the efforts of individual families will be enlisted for collaboration toward broadening the education of the child.

Parents involved in home schooling parent support groups should assess their collective political acumen and strength. Their efforts should be directed toward seeking legislation that will provide legal safeguards and social credibility for the family interested in conducting an autonomous, though qualified, school in the home.

Home Schooling Parent Support Group Leaders:

Home schooling parent support group leaders should take the initiative of leadership and work directly with the public school administrators, establishing a two-way avenue of communication. Questions and concerns about individual home schooling families in local school districts should be resolved with the aid and consultation of the home schooling parent support group leaders.

Home schooling parent support group leaders in Kansas and other states should encourage local constituents in the home schooling movement to assume greater identification with their particular state-wide home schooling parent support group. The overall viewpoint of this identification and involvement will expedite a greater facility for achieving functions

relating to legislative concerns, support concerns, group activities, teacher training, curriculum, testing, resources, and orientation of new home schooling families into the community.

Public School Authorities:

It is recommended that public school authorities become aware of the functions of the home schooling movement by reading its variety of publications which explain the aims and goals of the movement, its academic and social outcomes, its legal status, the aspirations and expectations of teaching parents, and the role of the home schooling parent support groups in the local communities.

It is also recommended that public school authorities work with the local home schooling parent support group to serve as conduits for information to assist families interested in home schooling their children.

Home schooling students should be encouraged to avail themselves of public school facilities that the home schooling family cannot duplicate because of expense, expertise, or group necessity. Courses such as band, choir, theater, sports, laboratory science, and

state-wide competitions should be open to the participation of interested home schoolers. Public schools in Kansas could receive state equalization aid for these part time students predicated on a full time equivalency formula of six hours per day prorated to the nearest tenth.

Administrator and Teacher Training Programs at Universities and Colleges:

To prepare public school teachers and administrators to make informed decisions regarding the home schooling movement, teacher training institutions should make provision in their curriculum for specific information regarding the home schooling movement, its legal implications, and its future in American education.

The home schooling parent should be offered workshops, training sessions, and continuing education services for the purpose of instructing the teaching parent on educational methodologies and child development stages with application directed to the tutorial environment.

State Education Agencies:

A state-wide coalition of autonomous home schooling support groups should be recognized by the legislature as an entity capable of conscientious self-regulation.

This alliance of home schooling parent support groups should be mandated to create their own provisos, qualifications, postulates, stipulations, measures, prototypes, norms, principles, and evaluations for the purpose of achieving a framework to support the educational goals for the child.

The state should make provision for parents who do not elect to become participants in the home schooling parent support group alliance. This would offer parents opportunity to establish familial accountability.

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APPENDIX A

SEMINAR WORKSHOP TOPICS

1991 PARENT EDUCATORS SEMINAR WEST

WORKSHOPS:

SESSION A
- A1 Teaching Teens
- A2 Math--Let Me Touch It
- A3 Curriculum

SESSION B
- B1 How to Turn Finger Counters into Number Crunchers
- B2 Creative Writing
- B3 Scheduling and Organization

SESSION C
- C1 A Primer of Learning for Parents
- C2 Home and Family vs. School and Vocation
- C3 Record Keeping

SESSION D
- D1 Ideas for Teaching History
- D2 Supplemental Resources
- D3 Legal

FEATURED SPEAKER: "Motivating Children to Learn"

VIDEO SCHEDULE:
- Is There Life After Housework?
- Basics of Education
- Socialization
- Who Can Teach?
- Reasons Why We Shouldn't Rush Our Children
- Guidelines for Beginners, I
- Guidelines for Beginners, II
- How Well Do You Know Your Teenagers?
- How Do You Know If You Are Succeeding?
- Getting Organized
- Helping Children Learn to Think

ON-GOING ACTIVITIES:
- Used book sale
- Home School How-to Tables

APPENDIX B

SEMINAR WORKSHOP TOPICS

1991 TPA HOME SCHOOL WORKSHOP

Saturday Workshop Schedule:

9:00 Backyard Science I
Getting Your Home School Started
Writing Road to Reading
The Influence of Sensory Integration on Learning
Teaching Current Events
Turning Finger Counters into Number Crunchers

10:30 Choosing Curriculum
Kansas Home School Legalities
Understand the Needs of Home Schooled Kids with Learning Problems
Creation Science: Evidences and Resources
The How and Why of Teaching Art

1:00 Backyard Science II
Learning Language Through Literature
KONOS
Developing Mission-Minded Family (Wycliffe)
Opportunities with 4-H
A Beka Curriculum

2:30 Capitalizing on our Differences I
Natural Science Resources for Home Schools
Mortensen Math
Teaching Your Kids to Understand the Times
Teaching Kansas History

3:30 Capitalizing on our Differences II
Weaver Curriculum
National Writing Institute
Creating Confident Communicators
Straight Thinking in a Crooked World

HOME SCHOOLING PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS IN KANSAS: A NATURALISTIC INQUIRY INTO THEIR CONCERNS AND FUNCTIONS

by

Celia Bishop

B.M., Kansas University, 1960
B.F.A., Kansas University, 1960
M.S., Kansas State University, 1987

AN ABSTRACT OF A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

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ABSTRACT

This naturalistic inquiry offers an overall description of the home schooling parent support groups in Kansas through detailing the concerns and functions communicated by their leadership.

The population was comprised of twenty-six local autonomous home schooling parent support groups in Kansas. A sample was selected using the maximum variation sampling technique. Triangulation of information was provided through unstructured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Standard methods were employed to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

There were five major concerns and functions:

(1) Home schooling parent support groups function to provide legislative and legal information. They offer accountability, visibility, and public credibility. Home schooling parent support groups are social entities which comprise a network of legislatively conscientious, autonomous structures.

(2) Home schooling parent support groups function to provide identity, diminish estrangement, and reinforce the state of belonging for parents and children. The home schooling community encourages

individual families to persevere when experiencing social or legal pressure. The persistence with which parents endeavor to educate the whole child, the sharing of experiences, and mutual support among home schooling families are strong bonding elements.

(3) Home schooling parent support groups function to provide educational group activities and programs. Characteristics of group activities include collaboration among teaching parents, flexible organizational structure, a pedagogical bias toward concrete learning experiences, a focus centered on hands-on learning, and action orientation.

(4) Home schooling parent support groups function to provide information on teaching methodologies adaptable to home schooling. Families are apprised of the variety of published curriculums through curriculum fairs and seminars, and through experienced home schooling families. Some support groups provide for the administration of standardized tests. Many groups exchange educational resources, curriculum materials, and ancillary equipment.

(5) Home schooling parent support groups function to provide information to new home schooling families concerning legalities, curriculum possibilities, and the

availability of support group functions. Mentoring is offered through the more experienced home schooling families.

Seven other associate concerns were evident: programs for older children, teaching credentials, unrealistic expectations, maintaining open membership, adult peer pressure, public education, and relationships with public schools.